

June 1988

DEEP RED

4.95

NO. 3

INTERVIEW

SAVINI
SPEAKS

COMBAT SHOCK

LOVECRAFT



**"A SUPER
SHOCKER!"**

—ABE GREENBERG "ENTERTAINMENT TODAY"

**Demons
long locked
in the
depths
of the
mind
come
out to
destroy
the weak
and
believing!**

POINT OF TERROR

THE OUTER LIMIT OF FEAR

CROWN INTERNATIONAL PICTURES Presents

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A Jade Associates Production Released by Crown International Pictures

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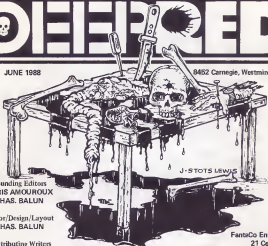
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DEEP RED

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A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Tom Savini, Doug and Pam Murray,
Lloyd Kaufman, Pericles Lewnes,
and Buddy Giovinazzo

THANKS TO:

ERIC CAIDEN

This issue is dedicated to

William J. (Billy Blood) Coston

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DEEP RED MAGAZINE # 3

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• EDITORIAL •

In the last ten years, two modestly-budgeted splatter films would have to share responsibility for changing the face of cinematic horror for all times. Once audiences gasped and squealed in shock and delight at the first instances of really graphic visuals, there was no turning back. For better or for bloodier, the off-screen, implied act of horror or mayhem gave way to the most explicit sights the filmmakers could imagine. And we ate it up!

Let's face it folks...the instant that SWAT teams kicked down the apartment door and pured that guy's head with a riot gun in *DAWN OF THE DEAD*, our perceptions of interpersonal mayhem were changed forever. And a year later at the dawn of the *FRIDAY THE 13TH* series, audience expectations were being primed again. When an unseen assailant drew a hunting knife across that girl's neck and a thin red line suddenly erupted into a gushing, crimson trench, the gates of gore were irrevocably loose'd upon a now ready, ravenous world of newly-baptized horror converts. The impact of these two scores, and the profound changes brought about because of them, cannot be denied. Audiences found they really liked that collective rush they got whenever the slicing and dicing got particularly...uh, messy.

FX artists became the new cult heroes, and no wonder. They gave horror films a much-needed shot in the head...er...arm, and were partially responsible for vitalizing the genre and winning over legions of new fans. The ranks of FX technicians were rapidly filled with young, enthusiastic, frightenously-talented horror fans who really enjoyed their work. And it showed. Unforgettable images were conjured up by these crafty, capricious artists and a new sense of fun, wonder, and sublimation seemed to fill the screen.

Innovations in technology, techniques, and materials have revolutionized the genre. Truly, today, there are no limits.

There are those who argue that horror is best implied and suggested and not just trotted out as the latest dog-and-pony fashion. Ah, but we can have it both ways, yes? Even in the same movie! These FX'ers are just trying out their wings, so let 'em fly. Make our jaws drop, knock our dicks in the dirt, show us things we've never seen, and renew our sense of wonder.

Tom Savini has done all those things...in spades. This kind, talented gentleman and scholar has exemplified for years what exactly is RIGHT about our business. Seeing Tom at various

horror conventions, perusing an expectant fan's portfolio, offering advice, or pausing to have his picture taken countless times, gives one pause to reconsider why we're all here in the first place. It's because of the spell cast by movies and the magicians like Tom who let us see things heretofore only imagined.

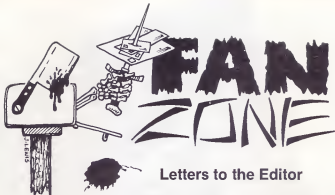
The last ten years have been fun...lots of it...but the sights yet to be seen will keep us coming back for another ten

Knock Us Dead, Guys.

Chas. Balun

Chas. Balun
Editor





Letters to the Editor

GORE GALORE

DEEP RED No. 2 was fantastic. Zombies, chainsaws, and gore galore were featured on every page. I read the whole magazine in one sitting—a sure sign of how interested I was in the material. Your writing style, along with your contributors, makes the mag an effortless exercise in reading.

One suggestion...How about printing some gory scenes from films that were cut to avoid an "X" rating? In particular, the recent FRIDAY THE 13THs. I'm sure all readers of your fine publication would appreciate this enlightening information.

Joseph Obizewski, Jr.
Philadelphia, PA

SHUCKS, THEY LOVE US

Thanks for another incredible issue of D.R. Thanks also for the listing in the 'zine column and the kind words. I am constantly astounded by the journalistic prowess of D.R. and, for that matter, most of the 'zines available. Wit, insight, and accuracy seem to proliferate more in the small press field than in any mass market glossy. Fanzines like SUBHUMAN, SLIMETIME, SLEAZOID, SCAREAPHANALIA, HI-TECH TERROR, GORE GAZETTE, SHOCK X-RESS, and VIDEO DRIVE-IN are so good they make you wanna' cry at times.

Brett Garton
Gladesville, Australia

NOT JUST THE COOK

Great magazine...much more interesting than Fangoria. One thing I must see is an interview and pictures of Jim Siedow, the true star of TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE. All Leatherface did was grunt and moan. Don't get me wrong, I like Leatherface also; but Jim Siedow gave the best performance by far. Mr. Siedow is also the only thing CHAINSAW II had going for it. The Cook from CHAINSAW and Norman Bates from PSYCHO are my all-time favorite characters.

Larry Graag
Bakersfield, CA

TOBE, WE MISS YE

Just picked up a copy of DEEP RED and it's got to be the most impressive 'zine I've seen in years. Naming it after an Argento film was brilliant. Maybe now I won't have to explain to people who Argento is; I can just say "READ THIS!"

Dennis Daniel was right on the money in his expose on Tobe Hooper. Anyone who can fuck up a movie with Karen Black (INVADERS FROM MARS) is really in trouble. Ruggero Deodato did more with her in two minutes of CUT AND RUN than Hooper did in two hours. I think Hooper's a lost cause unless someone gives him an \$800,000 budget and says "MAKE A FEATURE FILM WITH NO SPECIAL EFFECTS."

James Adler
New York, NY

SLIMETIME SEZ

Just a quick note to thank you for the 'zine plug in DEEP RED 2. I'm glad to see you're enjoying SLIMETIME.

REDNECK ZOMBIES...Whew! As Troma's old pitch line used to go... "The Troma Arena is \$\$\$." And it looks like they'll scrape up a bundle with that bloodcaked creation.

Good to hear from Gunnar, too. I'm only disappointed that he didn't give us his opinion on 'SAW 2 and its love-bitten (and generally wimpier) interpretation of Leatherface.

I especially enjoyed the film reviews, in particular, Steve Bisette's choices. FORBIDDEN ZONE, VAMPYRES, COMBAT SHOCK...He's consistently on the money. The only question is where can we get our hands on imports like HAMMER, THE STUDIO THAT DRIPPED BLOOD and LONG LIVE THE NEW FLESH?

Keep up the fine, grisly work. It's nice to see a fanzine grabbing The Big Time by the throat and taking a healthy bite. I only wish it didn't sell out so fast in the central New York area.

Steve Pudabski
Syracuse, NY

(Steve is editor of SLIMETIME.)

VIKES! THE SITE!

I recently got your first issue of DEEP RED fanzine and it's great. Issue 2 was also good, but the article by Dennis Daniel, "Here's Blood in Your Eye-I Zombie," was partly incorrect. He comments on how much he likes zombie films, yet the mistake he made regarding DAWN OF THE DEAD was almost unforgivable. He said it was a black female zombie that bit her husband through the arm and neck; actually, it was the other way around. Don't get me wrong, I loved the article. It just had a little blunder. Keep up the fantastic work Chas, Dennis, and the rest of the crew.

Rick Klink
Olmsted Towne, OH

OLD HIPPIE WRITES

DEEP RED is really a good mag. The letters to the editor are getting very entertaining—even the one from Blue Jean, Oregon (Oregon). I especially liked COW CHIP BLUES. But, that guy who thought MAKE THEM DIE SLOWLY was wimpy needs to have a chainsaw lobotomy!

George Montoya
Vancouver, WA

BLOODY REVENGE OF THE BRIDES OF DR. X

In response to Bisette's request in THE REVENGE OF DR. X review, the film he saw as REVENGE OF DR. X is actually BRIDES OF BLOOD (also titled ISLAND OF LIVING HORROR). It is, indeed, a Hemisphere release, 1968, and directed by that other Remen, Eddie. Along with Kent Taylor, top star in the independent international stable, it stars John Ashley (of course) and Beverly Hills (I).

This is the first of the BLOOD ISLAND cycle and was also a favorite staple on New York's WOR Channel 5. If you were lucky enough to have seen it in '68, you could have received a promotional wedding ring. (Nice, but not as special as those green gelatin packets you got as part of the "Blood Island Oath" for MAD DOCTOR OF BLOOD ISLAND.)

Glad to be of help.

Bob DiProspero
Minneapolis, MN

(Sorry to say that you're wrong BRIDES OF BLOOD is a different picture altogether, the first (if you don't count 1955's TERROR IS A MAN, later re-released as BLOOD CREATURES) of the infamous "Blood Island" trilogy, which also included MAD DOCTOR OF BLOOD ISLAND and BEAST OF BLOOD BRIDES was released on videocassette in 1985 by Regal Video as BRIDES OF THE BEAST. Yes, the same Regal Video who released the mysterious REVENGE OF DR. X. See our next letter for more information. SB)

I do not have any conclusive information regarding THE REVENGE OF DR. X, but maybe I can help.

I called Lawrence Cohn at Variety. (He reviews much of the schlock, especially stuff that only appears on video.) He has watched the tape a few times and cannot identify it either. He has asked some of his sources around the country if they could identify this picture. Apparently, this is a bootleg video with inaccurate/misleading box credits and video titles/credits. The video appears to be a Japanese production (In English?) made by Daiel. It probably dates from 1977 and has the word "Garden" in the title. It stars James Craig.

No answers, just more hints to research.

Jeffrey Johnson
Cleveland, OH

(In the upcoming GORE ZONE 2, amigo Tim Lucas suggests INSECTIVOROUS may be the original title. Anyhow, Jeffrey, thanks for the hints. The flick is definitely filmed in English. The other info you and Lawrence offer sound plausible enough. Still, no cigar, though.

That's Kent Taylor, not James Craig, in the film, I'm sure of it. Though Mr. Cohn deserves it for sitting through that dog more than once, that drawing I offer still needs a home. Anybody else got some info to offer?

Tim Lucas also tells me that Regal Video, who put out REVENGE OF DR. X, is actually a subsidiary of a furniture company. And, no, they don't seem to know what the film really is either. SB)

FULCI FOR POPE

Tell Todd he's doing a great job...but to get it correct. No, Dario Argento is not the King...it's got to be Lucio Fulci. Don't get me wrong, Dario Argento's fantastic, he's great...but, Fulci's The Man!

"B. B." Cassen
Philadelphia, PA

PSYCHOS SUCK?

God knows I would eat my way through a hundred gut-munching zombies before I missed any publication with the name Chis. Bulun printed on it. I'm sorry to say I have one criticism. In The Gore Score, you gave PSYCHOS IN LOVE a "7" for gore and 2 1/2 skulls. Sounded like good splatter-filled fun with recommendations like "some of the dialog is priceless...what a surprise!" Uh, not quite. So I get D.R. 2 (Amazing! I was very impressed!) and I see PSYCHOS IN LOVE get a rating of 1 skull and "2" for gore, which seemed like the proper review to me. My question is why the first review? Did you see it again and change your mind or what?

Say pory. Looking forward to a subscription!

Jason Martin
Baltimore, MD

(No, I didn't change my mind, or what, even. Dennis Daniel reviewed the film last issue and he thought it blew dead dogs. I was more forgiving in The Gore Score 'cause I saw the film after sitting through a Jess Franco Cannibal Film Festival and was grateful for small, even teeny favors.

[De gustibus non est disputandum. CB]





Tom Savini...mention his name and a goremeister's face lights up! Tom Savini...the Makeup King of Carnage! The creative genius behind such beloved films as DAWN OF THE DEAD, DAY OF THE DEAD, FRIDAY THE 13TH (Parts 1 and 4), CREEPSHOW, and more. Tom Savini...actor, writer, director, a Renaissance Man of Horror. Tom Savini...a true gentleman who was kind enough to grant DEEP RED an exclusive interview about his projects—past, present, and future.

SAVINI SPEAKS

INTERVIEW WITH A MASTER ILLUSIONIST
BY DENNIS DANIEL

When I found out I was going to speak to the Master, I tried to ask him the kinds of questions that every gorehound wants the answers to. He answered every one!

I think you'll be surprised to find out that Tom is not some sick, demented nut who thrills to the sight of shining entrails being yanked! Tom is a gentle, even romantic, well-rounded person who derives his creative inspiration from his love of life and film (all kinds of film, not just horror). Tom Savini...read on and see what he's really like!



RED: Can you tell us a little bit about some current projects you're involved in?

TS: We just finished MONKEY SHINES, a Romero film, based on a Michael Stewart novel. We spent six months working on the effects and the shooting. They had real monkeys featured in the story to achieve various things the one monkey is supposed to be doing in the film. But, you know, a lot of times the monkeys wouldn't do what you wanted them to do. Actually, they would after awhile with conditioning; but on a movie set, you can't sit around waiting for them to perform. A lot of money gets wasted that way. So, that was what our function was—to save time and money and build these fake monkeys and use their arms and legs in out-of-focus foreground shots with the actor.

When the monkeys couldn't do something, like pull a plug out of the wall or inject somebody in the back of the neck with a hypodermic needle, then that's when we came in with mechanical hands, mechanical monkey bodies.

RED: Did you use the same kind of design in terms of the pulleys you used and the effects to get the lips to move as you did on Fluffy in CREEPSHOW or are these full-body suits you created?

TS: Actually, for CREEPSHOW we created a full-body suit the actor could get into. In MONKEY SHINES, they're organ-grinder monkeys, so you can imagine how small the monkeys are. The size made our work a bit more complex.

At times, we wished we had an actor we could put a monkey head on. We did build some over-sized monkey hands that a human being could wear in conjunction with over-sized props. Then, when it was shot in the right way, you had the impression it was a real monkey doing it.

"Romero still feels there's another film. It might come out in a remake of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, which is very seriously being considered. George has asked me to direct it."

RED: Is MONKEY SHINES a Romero-scripted film?

TS: I think it's his script.

RED: Do you know when it's planning to be released?

TS: Probably this summer.

RED: Is there a fourth DEAD film in the works, Tom, that you know about?

TS: George doesn't feel that DAY OF THE DEAD was the last film in the trilogy. Mainly



because he was forced to write it four or five times. The first script was like RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK with zombies. It would have cost a fortune to do it. So, he wrote it down...wrote it down...wrote it down. He still feels there's another film there. It might come out in a remake of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, which is very seriously being considered. George has asked me to direct it. He wants to be executive producer and it will be in color, of course, and updated. One of the purposes of that would be they would finally own the title NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. You can go to K-Mart or 7-Eleven now and buy it for \$7.

RED: Didn't he have an agreement with John Russo that Russo would own the part of the title "Living Dead" and he would get "Dead"?

TS: You might be right, but I know that Russo has to be involved in the remake. In fact, it's Russo I've been talking to exclusively about directing the remake. The problem is tying George down right now because he is so busy in the editing stage of MONKEY SHINES.

RED: Well, you've already used "Night," "Dawn," and "Day," so you might as well go back to the beginning. (Laughs)

TS: There's always "Branch of the Dead."

"I've also signed a deal with New World Pictures to direct two films; the first one is a Stephen King short story, Graveyard Shift."

RED: With CREEPSHOW 2, why didn't you create your own makeup effects?

TS: I thought I was going to do CREEPSHOW 2. I was working on TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2 at the time and Laurel called me and asked if I could recommend someone to do the effects on CREEPSHOW 2. I said, "That's a strange question. Why aren't you asking me?"



They said that Richard Rubenstein, the head of Laurel, didn't want to tie me up cause he wanted me to direct some TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE episodes. I said I could direct TALES and supervise and design the effects for CREEPSHOW 2.

They wound up spending maybe twice what they would have paid me with the problems they had using the person they did. I told them, "This person can't do it unless he has top-notch help." So, I suggested top-notch help. In their wisdom, however, they hired their person and they ended up firing him one and a half months into the production cause some of his stuff was so bad. There was nothing the guys I recommended could do about it cause the stuff had already been created. The guy they hired sculpted the head on the wooden Indian. Mike Treic, who had worked for me, sculpted the rest of the body, which was much better sculpted than the head. Fortunately, it all fit together quite well. Mike Tursick, Greg Nicotero, Everett Burrell, and Howard Berger kind of took over. They tried to save the thing, but I think the film is still terrible.

RED: I feel it could have been a better film if they would have used real actors instead of animation. Do you feel that way, too?



TS: I think the animation was really good. Rick Catizone did that but I got a lot of comments that there should have been less animation and more live stuff. I guess they thought they could save money by doing it with animation; but I think they ended up spending more.

RED: Is there any reason why you didn't use your own voice?

TS: There's no way I would have used my own voice. A guy like the Creep needs to have a really deep tone.

RED: You're a man of a thousand faces, but not of a thousand voices?

TS: I did study ventriloquism at one time, but it takes a lot to get your voice to sound like that. The guy who did my voice at one time did Charlie Tuna and I think he also does Fred Flintstone. I went into it knowing full well I didn't want to use my own voice, it's too high-pitched. I think they made a right choice, but they probably should have used someone like Fred Gwynne.

I had the recording for three weeks before I went down to do it. They sent me the long version, but when I got there, they only wanted certain lines from it. I'd memorized it in sequence; so while they were putting the makeup on me, I had to rememorize the lines and listen to them so I could lip sync it. It worked out okay, though.

RED: Are you in the promos in the theaters that were done for CREEPSHOW?

TS: I didn't want to go to California and put the makeup back on just for promos, so they hired somebody out there.

RED: In KNIGHTRIDERS you had a wonderful role...I think probably the best role you've had so far in a film. Why is it that lately the projects you've been getting involved in have just been bit parts and nothing more substantial? Is there a time problem with you to try and push yourself as an actor? Are you trying to go in too many different directions?

TS: I feel the more you do, the more you get to do. I try to play a part in all the films I do the effects on. In CREEPSHOW, I played a garbage man. To maintain benefits with the Screen Actors Guild, you have to earn so much a year as an actor. As long as I do that, that's fine. I might play bigger roles later on. But, time is a factor when I'm doing effects. There is one movie I hope no one sees...well, it's too late. I got calls all the time from people who say, "Hey, I saw you on THE RIPPER."

"I did one day on that film; they wanted me to play THE RIPPER. The film is pathetic."

RED: That's something how they exploited you on that.

TS: I did one day on that film; I flew to Oklahoma. They had already shot the movie and I hadn't seen it. They told me they hired a guy that looked just like me as a stand-in for all the running scenes. They wanted me to play THE RIPPER when you finally meet him. I did it and I got the film later. The film is pathetic.

RED: I love a good gore effect, but I thought it was too sick, quite honestly, when they wrap the girl's intestines around her.

TS: They dwell too long on all the effects for one thing. Here's this guy who's 6-feet-tall with an Afro hairstyle who looks nothing like me. They do medium shots on him and then when you meet the guy, it's me. I directed the sequence I'm in cause the director let me. He was a new guy who didn't quite have a grasp on how to direct this stuff. Everything you see when I'm on film, I directed. That is, except for when I was getting ready to leave and was out of makeup, they said, "Can you put the eyes back in and the costume back on for the scene when your fingers are cut off so we can put the hand in the foreground?" So, I did that, but I didn't direct that. Again, they dwell too long on that and it's not something I would have wanted to do. Anyway, they paid me good money. It was a fluke to play Jack the Ripper. I had no idea the rest of the movie was so bad, though.

RED: Let's talk a little more about makeup. Overall, what would you say your experiences with Tobe Hooper and TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2 were?

TS: I loved that. Texas was wonderful. Tobe had lots of problems on the film, however, because I think he had a week to prepare it between finishing INVADERS FROM MARS and then jumping into CHAINSAW. The writer was on the set every day, L. M. "Kit" Carson; he's a great guy. So is Tobe. On the last day, Kit was still writing new stuff and handing it to the actors. They were making the film up as they went along. They released the film unrated, which means they could have put everything they had in the movie.

RED: All the pre-press I read implied it was going to be a "Yuppie massacre" kind of thing.

TS: That's exactly what it was supposed to be. There's a lot of Yuppie massacre that we shot, too, that Cannon chose not to put in the film.

RED: So, in essence, it's Cannon's fault the film turned out the way it did?

TS: I think so. It couldn't have been

Tobe. Tobe had his cut and then Cannon took over, I think. That's why perhaps the movie failed. If they had left in the 40% of effects they cut out, the film would have had a lot more personality.

"I saw it (RE-ANIMATOR) in L.A. I fell asleep in it and when I woke up, there was a severed head going down on this woman."

RED: When I heard you were involved in this, Tobe was involved, and then L. M. "Kit" Carson, who wrote PARIS, TEXAS and is a very well-respected writer, I was expecting...GOD!

TS: That's what I kept saying. I said, "Look, this is called TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE; there's nothing in here." You see the film, which is pretty creepy for the first half hour, then you sit around watching people talk for another hour.

RED: The thing is the horror fans don't know the behind-the-scenes homesick that goes on... shall we cut this and cut that. They're just judging the final product.

TS: That's what is bad. Luckily, Fangoria came out with an article about some of the stuff cut out of the film. I felt there were some masterpieces left out.

RED: Was it your idea to do the Slim Pickens skeleton on the rocket?

TS: No, it must have been Tobe's.

RED: Did you do all the skeleton work in the underground caves or was it your whole team?

TS: There is a guy named Daniel Miller who is a fabulous sculptor. In fact, in Austin, Texas every Halloween, he does these huge dragons and creatures and places them on the outside of skyscrapers down there so the whole city looks like there's monsters crawling all over it! He did, I don't know how many skeletons. We gave him some of ours and he made a mold from one of our skulls and produced about 500 skulls. All the sculptures you see were done by him...the chair, the bone furniture.



RED: Overall, you're disappointed with the final product?

TS: Yeah, I think everybody is.

RED: To be as well?

TS: I think he's really pissed off about it, mainly because of the limitations they placed on him. They kept coming up with deadlines; they sent second unit directors down there to speed things up. It really got out of hand.

RED: What do you think of Clive Barker? The minute I read his work, I wondered what Tom Savini felt about it.

TS: I had never read any of his stuff before, although I have a few of his books. I saw *HELLRAISER* and thought some of the effects were great, but I tuned out when this box opened and light started appearing through windows. When you ask an audience to accept supernatural stuff like that, I think they either do or they don't. Maybe half do and half don't, so you've lost half your audience. I'd rather

see something that includes all the audience. It might just be me. I've talked to a lot of people who love the movie and there were some neat things in it with the hooks coming out and grabbing people.

RED: I think the body rising from the floor after the blood had splattered was fairly intense.

TS: His stuff is very fantasy-oriented and I have difficulty with that, although I don't have difficulty with *THE EXORCIST* or *ALIENS* or stuff like that. There's a story of his where I think a bed starts killing people...C'mon, how much can we accept? But this all could be just me. I plan to read his stuff now to see exactly where he's coming from.

RED: Let's talk about what's happening from the directing angle with Tom Savini.

TS: I did direct three episodes for *TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE*. The last one is called "Family Reunion." It'll be on the air in May of this year. I've also signed a deal with New World

"I liked GREYSTOKE a lot and loved HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS. E.T. is one of my top ten."

Pictures to direct two films in the next two years and the first one is a Stephen King short story, GRAVEYARD SHIFT. When reviewing the script, I took out everything I couldn't personally believe in. If I have to sell a story to an audience, I want no obstacles. I want them to believe it. We had a character become a Dream Walker, which means he dreams even in a waking state. In that kind of position, you can show anything you want because the audience knows it's part of somebody's hallucinations, illusions. If you'd try to present that kind of stuff in reality, you'd have a difficult time because it doesn't exist, but we all have dreams.

RED: When you say you're dealing with reality, you're doing so within the sense of what the film is projecting, right? We all know zombies don't exist, but within the context of a DAY OF THE DEAD, it's a given.

TS: Exactly. I think that's why NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET was so successful, because a lot of it was in dreams so you can accept it happening. So, I have a little difficulty accepting HELLRAISER, because all that stuff was supposed to be real and happening. I thought the connection between the box and the Cenobites was a flimsy connection, speaking only as a director.

INVASION U.S.A.



Anyway, that's one of the films I'll be directing. I don't know about the other film yet.

RED: Are you trying to stray away from explicit gore effects? Is that a change you're pursuing?

TS: I always have wanted to make a transition from the gore to creatures. I was lucky enough to do that in CREEPSHOW and with a film I did in Hong Kong called SCARED TO DEATH, MONKEY SHINES, of course, and INVASION U.S.A., the Chuck Norris film. Although it was gory stuff, it wasn't a horror movie. In MONKEY SHINES there's a brain operation; but, again, it's taking a surgical situation and making people believe they're really seeing a surgery.

RED: When you say "brains," right away I think of RE-ANIMATOR. Did you see that?

TS: Yeah, I saw it in L.A. That was weird. I fell asleep in it and when I woke up, there was a severed head going down on this woman. That was outlandish, however, it didn't try to stuff it down your throat as reality. You knew right away you were going to go off on this little adventure...this fantasy thing...which was a great premise too about the dead and bringing them back.

RED: A lot of our readers and people who love the genre in general hold RE-ANIMATOR in extremely high regard.

TS: It was one of the few Empire films that was successful, wasn't it? Again, they do the same thing; they go over the border with explicit gore for its own sake, with no connection to the story, what story there is.

RED: You're currently working on Bizarro II. Will it be out soon?

TS: It won't be called Bizarro. That's a title that Crown Publishing put on the book. It will be called Grand Illusions II and not anything to do with Bizarro.

RED: Before the '60s, you didn't hear much about makeup artists. The Jack Pierces of the world were pretty much kept hidden; you never saw any techniques explained. Now, there's all kinds of books, i.e., Dick Smith has done so much

and you've written two books yourself. How do you feel about giving away the makeup techniques and methods? Do you give them all away or are there some things you'd rather not let people in on?

TS: Of course. I try to avoid reading a story in Fangoria or other publications about a movie until I've had a chance to see it. A prime example is Time Magazine did a two-page spread on the mother ship rising over Devil's Canyon in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS. Their article totally ruined that moment for me when I saw the film. If I had not seen the article before I saw the movie, it would have blown me away. When I knew it was miniatures, it ruined it. Anytime articles come out on STAR TREK, I avoid them. I was surprised when Spock died. It's too bad when magazines come out and give everything away. What's the point of that? For me, the point is save it until you've seen the movie and then read about it.

Back to your question, a long time ago, you'd see a movie and as far as you were concerned, it was the stars, the actors, who were responsible. They were the ones who got all the publicity. All of a sudden, directors became popular...George Romero...Tobe Hooper...Hitchcock...DePalma.....



"I think it's better than sex. Really, when I'm 80 years old and can't get it up anymore, I'm still going to love horror movies."

Woody Allen...Scorsese...Ron Howard. It became a David Cronenberg film...a George Romero film. Then the same thing happened with effects artists. More and more people wanted to learn more about the effects. The "stars" of some films became the makeup artists.

RED: I know you love Lon Chaney. As a matter of fact, I would have loved to get the Lon Chaney painting, "Lon of a Thousand Faces," at the Forry Ackerman auction we both recently attended.

TS: I missed that. I also missed a life mask of Clark Gable. I do have a life mask of Boris Karloff's face, which I've had for sometime. I got the Tyrannosaurus Rex animation model from DINOSAURUS. The original script from THE WIZARD OF OZ went for \$31,000 and the Frankenstein stand-in dummy from THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN went for about \$20,000.

RED: What did you think of that? Did you think it was an original?

TS: It could've been from a life cast of Karloff, but it wasn't the Frankenstein monster, I can tell you that. The suit looked very authentic and they had these boots that looked like something from THE BRIDE, but it could have been Glenn Strange's. It was quite a collector's piece for whomever got it.

RED: Getting back to Lon Chaney, he never gave away any of his secrets, although he died so young, who knows.

TS: The whole publicity thing on him was to keep him the "mystery man." What you did hear from studio publicity was all the myths of him torturing himself. A lot of that was true, but I think they went overboard with some of it. Forry's book, Lon of a Thousand Faces, and one before that, Faces, Forms, and Films, shed some light on him.

RED: So you think it's okay to let out some of your effect secrets after the film has been released?

TS: Right. When people go to see these films, they're going to see the latest exhibit of effects from the artist they like.

RED: Are there any effects you've seen that you say, "How the hell did they do that?"

TS: Sure. A lot of stuff Rob Bottin did in THE THING or in TWILIGHT ZONE, THE MOVIE. Almost anything he does is amazing. ROBOCOP was fantastic. Also Rick Baker's stuff and Dick Smith's, almost everything they do is "state of the art," "top of the line." They are the best.

RED: Are there any recent films that have impressed or influenced you?

TS: I liked PRINCESS BRIDE a lot. I really love a good love story. SOMEWHERE IN TIME...I loved that one. ROBOCOP. PREDATOR...I love anything Arnold does.

RED: I was at the premiere of RUNNING MAN and got a chance to talk to Stephen King, who seemed pretty happy with it.

TS: He normally isn't overwhelmed by the film renditions of his work, except for CREEP SHOW and DEAD ZONE. I hope he feels the same way about GRAVEYARD SHIFT, once and if I get to do it.

RED: It's nice to be able to work with people who are now your friends because you lose that sense of business and can talk a little bit more intimately.

TS: There was never that sense with Steve, he's like one of your buddies you can sit around talking with about your favorite TWILIGHT ZONE episode.

RED: Is PET SEMATARY or THE STAND in the works with Romero that you know of?

TS: They're in limbo. They can't do THE STAND in one film, but they also know they wouldn't make as much money from an HBO thing. Everyone is waiting for THE STAND to come out. While we were doing DAY OF THE

DEAD, George and I were talking about the effects in PET SEMATARY and how to accomplish them. I think he has a better grasp of it now after having done MONKEY SHINES and having to work with these monkeys and seeing how the mechanics interact with them. If PET SEMATARY is ever done, George will direct it, cause Steve won't even let it be done unless George directs it.

RED: Do you have any dream project you'd like to see done, Tom?

TS: I'd like to remake TRAPEZE, the old Burt Lancaster, Tony Curtis film. Either remake it or go back in time and be in it. I'm really crazy about that movie. I have a thing I've been writing called Dreams. If my directing ever gets off the ground where I can pick and choose, I'd like to do one of those. Plus, I was working on an idea of a guy on the highway who was killing people from his car, then all of a sudden, people started doing it for real. So, I dropped that project, I thought it had possibilities, though.

"I'd like to remake TRAPEZE, the old Burt Lancaster, Tony Curtis film."

RED: So Dreams is a project. Do you have anything written yet?

TS: Oh yes, pages and pages. It's not in script form. Every once in awhile, I'll write an idea in script form. So, I've got a lot of pieces that need to be put together.

RED: What are some of your favorite horror/sci-fi films that you could watch over and over?

TS: It's interesting you ask me that instead of saying, "What is your favorite horror film," because it's impossible to say what my favorite horror film is. I have about 1,000 videos and it's difficult when I want to watch a movie to look at the shelves and pick one. First, you have

to decide what you're in the mood for. Or, I'll see something on the street or even smell something that reminds me of a period of my life which reminds me of a movie.

THE EXORCIST, of course, BLADERUNNER, THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, INVASION OF THE SAUCER MEN, DEVIL GIRL FROM MARS (Laughs), believe it or not. I even liked EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC; I could watch that film forever. BEN HUR, BARRY LYNDON, and LEGEND.

RED: Do you feel LEGEND was panned unjustly?

TS: I think so. There is a mood in that film I can tune into anytime.

RED: How about the classics?

TS: I don't want to be too obvious, but the uncut FRANKENSTEIN, the uncut KING KONG, they found a negative back in Germany and put it back together. THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, of course. There's an Italian one, I think, called CASTLE OF TERROR with Barbara Steele. BLACK SUNDAY, the Mario Bava film with Barbara Steele. The old THING and the new THING...I could watch over and over again.

"I even liked EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC; I could watch that film forever."

RED: What did you think of Lamberto Bava's film DEMONS?

TS: I haven't seen it yet.

I liked GREYSTOKE a lot and loved HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS. ET is one of my top 10; I cried eight times on that.

RED: ET, you're kidding! There's some gorehounds who'll be saying, "Tom Savini likes ET! This is a man who rips heads off!"

TS: That's kind of a misnomer with me. I love that my name got out there, somehow, with the gore films, but I love creatures and doing them.



RED: It's important that gore fans understand you have to be a well-rounded individual. You have to like and experience many different things. Horror is such a basic instinct in mankind. It's almost like sex because of the jolt it gives you.

TS: I think it's better than sex. Really, when I'm 80-years-old and can't get it up anymore, I'm still going to love horror movies.

Speaking of being well-rounded, it bothers me sometimes when I get letters from "fans," let's call them, with pictures of themselves with their guts hanging out or their brains oozing out of their eyeballs that are really crude. They're not even well done. But, their letter is on this stationery they've had printed that says "special makeup effects laboratory," and they know nothing or very little about special makeup effects.

RED: It seems it's very important to you as a creative person—a writer/director/actor—that effects be applied within the context of a film to enhance them and not be done for exploitation sake.

TS: Absolutely. If not, there's a missing ingredient. It's just gore for gore's sake and nothing behind it.

RED: I guess FRIDAY THE 13TH really has you reeling. You really finished Jason off, Tom, in a big way!

TS: But they did two more after that! When I did Part I, they offered me Part 2 and I turned it down because the script had Jason running around. I said, "Well, Jason doesn't exist. He died in the lake and his mother was the killer." They said, "Oh, we're going to change that; Jason's not going to be around." So, I turned it down and Part 2 came out with Jason bigger than ever! So Part 3, they didn't offer me, but they gave me Part 4. I took that because: (1) it was called "The Final Chapter", and (2) I gave Jason birth and I wanted to be the one to kill him.

RED: You were Frankenstein trying to kill your monster.

TS: Yes, I knew I had to kill him in a glorious way.

RED: For me, that's the end of the series, if it should have ever been taken that far. But the almighty dollar, Tom, it's a bone of contention with genre lovers.

TS: Look at what else they've done. Paramount sits around and says, "What can we put on TV? Well, we own FRIDAY THE 13TH, let's put that on!" It has nothing to do with FRIDAY THE 13TH; they're just taking a title and using it. If they can make a buck, they'll do it. And, let's face it, so would I and, perhaps, you.

RED: It's upsetting to fans. Horror fans are the most gullible people in the world cause they have a love of the genre that's so deep-rooted. They'll pay their five bucks and go see anything, hoping to see another DAWN OF THE DEAD, a DAY OF THE DEAD. A lot of people making horror films these days are not horror film people, if you know what I mean.



"One of the greatest horror movies around had absolutely no makeup effects--THE HAUNTING."

TS: I wholeheartedly agree. It goes back to what we were saying, you have to have the background of the classics in the horror genre; you can't violate or stray too far from that. They know horror films usually make money. I've worked for people who were doing porno films and tried to make a venture into the horror genre and failed. But, some of them succeed, FRIDAY THE 13TH is a prime example.

RED: What do you feel is the state of the horror film in the '80s? Do you have any opinion on that?

TS: That's a good question. We go through periods...we had FRANKENSTEIN and WOLFGANG and now they aren't scary anymore. Then, there was gore and I hope it's run its gamut. Hopefully, the creatures are coming back. They remade THE THING. There was talk about remaking CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. MONSTER SQUAD. ROBOCOP to me is a return of the creature. There hadn't been a good creature for a long time before ALIEN. That was a whole new, wonderful monster. Back then, if you wanted to kill off that kind of thing, you hooked them up with Abbott and Costello. Who do you hook them up with today? Richard Pryor? Robin Williams? They tried to end the splatter stuff, I hope, with the parody SATURDAY THE 14TH.

I get scripts all the time. I've got a script called "The Unsuspecting Teenagers," which is bringing all those killers--Jason, Freddy, etc. together. There's a convention in a motel nearby and they're all meeting there. There's a haunted house...it has a big comedy thing. You'd think something like that would be a strong message saying, "Hey, it's time to stop these things."

RED: It seems what is also happening in the '80s is horror is breaking down in and of itself into sub-genres.

TS: Even if you want to go back to the suspenseful, psychological thriller, you almost can't because even the low-budget stuff that comes out are so full of effects that the effects, again, are the stars of the film. So to try and make one of those would probably fail, miserably. Well, I take that back, FATAL ATTRACTION was great.

RED: Did you happen to see THE HIDDEN?

TS: No, not yet.

RED: What happened in THE HIDDEN is they have one effect, one, and I enjoyed it tremendously.

TS: Well, there you go. If it works, that's great. Some friends of mine worked on THE HIDDEN and thought it was great. FATAL ATTRACTION was a great suspense movie and had about one effect in it. One of the greatest horror movies around had absolutely no makeup effects or monsters--THE HAUNTING. That was a scary, scary film. It was all in manipulating the audience and then scaring them with the stuff you planted in their brains early on.



RED: I would love to see films like that again; films that make you think. The '80s mentality overall is that everything is given to us, nothing is left to our imagination.

TS: But you see, the danger in that, the sad thing about that, is the fans are so brainwashed they would be disappointed if they didn't see effects. It will take a lot to change that, I think.



RED: Do you hold the original **TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE** in high regard as a groundbreaking film? Let's face it, it's really not gory.

TS: It's not, but that's the magic of it. All the stuff happened behind closed doors. You didn't see it or you only saw the beginning of it. They set it up well and then your mind, your imagination, completed it. It may sound strange coming from me, but the less you show the better it is *cause* the audience can create it in their minds sometimes better than we can physically create it with rubber and glue.

There's a couple of different scares. There's the chair-jumper where something pops up and it jolts you. There's the one in **THE HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL** where they're in the basement and looking around and the girl stands up and, all of a sudden, the old lady is standing there. That's still a very scary film, but it's a chair-jumper, okay. Then, there's the stuff that happens out of suspense where you're leading up to it...leading up to it...and you're already scared before it happens. Then you get to the top of the roller coaster and ride all the way down and it pays off. Then there's the scares that hit you really low...in the crotch...and **TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE** did that. It made you feel a visceral, nauseating response.

RED: Because it was filmed that way. (A) It was real; and (B) You felt like you were there because of its documentary style quality.

TS: You said the magic word—it was filmed that way. The same story could have been filmed by somebody else and not had those elements in it. Hitchcock says the emotion comes from the style in which the artist paints. For example, if you see a painting of apples, you don't care if the apples are sour or whatever. It's the feeling you get from looking at the picture. It's the way it's painted that affects you that way. It's the way the director sets up and films things.

The first time I heard him say that, I didn't quite click into it. I thought about what he said in watching certain films and the emotion does come from the style. Another example is **LOLITA**. Kubrick is a master in doing stuff like that. In **LOLITA**, James Mason is shooting Peter Sellers. He goes behind a painting and the painting gets a bullet in the head and you hear the body fall behind it. Your mind completes what went on there and, again, the emotion came from the way he presented the material. Today in a gore film, you would have put an appliance on Peter Sellers' forehead and his brains would have been blown out in the back! Bang! It's over and it's gory. The way Kubrick did it was much more emotion packed in the way he presented it.



RED: Do you remember the first horror film that affected you and scared the shit out of you?

TS: Well, don't forget I saw movies like **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** when they originally came out in the theaters. My younger crew or friends now see those things on television and it's difficult to believe they had a



first run in the theaters. THE CREATURE got me and even I WAS A TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN. I remember hiding under the chair and not being able to look at its face. FRANKENSTEIN got me really bad.

Some of us got into the business because of the magic that affected us when we were kids and now the magic is gone for us. We have destroyed that magic we got into movies for in the first place.

RED: I know what you mean. I've been in radio for 11 years and I can't listen to the radio without seeing the person sitting there and doing everything.

TS: I just bought a bunch of those old radio shows on tape, "Inner-Sanctum," "Lights Out." When I go on a long trip, I just bring a bunch of those and the miles zoom by.

RED: There's a wonderful version of DRACULA with Orson Welles, Mercury Theater. Have you listened to that?

TS: No, not yet. The other side has FRANKENSTEIN. DRACULA on one side and FRANKENSTEIN on the other. I just listened to DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE coming back from Florida.

RED: I guess the last thing to be said is although Tom Savini is the makeup effects wizard, there's a lot to be said for leaving it to the imagination as well.

TS: Absolutely. It's a living. I hopefully do it well; but I do feel the less you show the better it is.





FLESH MONKEY AUTHOR DENNIS DANIEL

HERE'S BLOOD IN YOUR EYE

BY DENNIS
DANIEL

SEQUELITIS

Nine out of ten sequels suck. The reason is simple. They're not made with the same creative vision... they're made to make money.

And, like an asshole, I have been giving them my money. I walk into the theatre like a pig about to be slaughtered, pay my five bucks, and watch my dreams of a horrific reprise (even improvement) of the original film's vision go right down the shitter.

The list of inferior sequels is endless! Recent examples include: EVIL DEAD 2, HOUSE 2, POLTERGEIST 2, CREEPSHOW 2, HILLS HAVE EYES 2, JAWS 2, 3, and 4, NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 2 (What in gore's name was Freddy doing showing up in reality for the pool scene?), FRIDAY THE 13th from 2 on (although Part 4 had some nice FX care of Tom Savini), EXORCIST 2, TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2...the

list goes on and on! What makes them even more disappointing is the way they destroy established characters. In FRIDAY THE 13TH, it's not Jason who kills everyone, it's his mother! Jason is dead. But, naturally, as soon as the film makes money, BOOM, they'll find a way to bring back the dead! It reminds me of all the Universal FRANKENSTEIN, WEREWOLF, and MUMMY films of the '40s. They always found a way to bring them all back, even if the reason made no sense. Anything to make a buck—it's the American way!

So, why do I bother? Why don't I just wait for it to show up on HBO? Because I am a horror fan; and in every horror fan's heart, hope springs eternal! I hope against hope that the sequel will be another classic. It's happened before. Examples include all of the Romero dead films, ALIENS, THE BRIDE and SON OF FRANKENSTEIN films, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, even SUPERMAN II. (I know the last two weren't "horror" films, but you get my point.)



And so, as a true horror fan, I refused to acknowledge the overwhelming odds against me. Bravely, I recently walked into a theatre, with head held high, to see yet another sequel of a film I deeply and truly love—RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD, PART II. I wanted it to be good; I prayed to Almighty Gore that it would be good. I wished with every fiber of my being that it would be good...and what did I get for my wishful thinking? The worst travesty of a Zombie film ever made! (I know I should have smelled a dead rat when I saw the movie poster art, it's almost identical to the one created for FRIGHT NIGHT. Uh, oh.)



Gorehounds—be forewarned. This isn't a horror film; this is Abbott and Costello meet the Zombies! Yes, I know it was pre-sold long ago as a horror/goreless/comedy. And yes, I know they told us there'd be even more comedy than the first film. But shit! There wasn't one ounce of horror in the whole sequel!

Don't get me wrong. I don't dislike horror/comedies. *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON* is excellent, with an equal balance of horror and comedy. The first film, *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD*, also has a fair mix of both elements (thanks to Dan O'Bannon). Romero always includes a bit of humor in his dead films. Even *RE-ANIMATOR* has its comedic moments. The difference is, these films had respect for the

horror element. It is the lack of respect that makes *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD, PART II* such a bone-crushing disappointment. In order to dissect the many flaws that abound in this sequel, we must compare it to its far superior predecessor.

In the first film, the acting is superb. The characters react realistically to all the horrific situations they find themselves in. In short, they are believable! In the sequel, the acting is awful, with all kinds of lame-ass comedy relief that comes across forced and unnatural. This film is all schtick and no shock! The first film had a wide selection of interesting portrayals that a horror film could identify with. The sequel has a bunch of clowns as characters with a little obnoxious kid as the main character. Who's going to identify with a

kid in an R-rated film? To me, this was a totally self-destructive act! What was director Ken Wiederhorn trying to do? Make a Steven Spielberg Zombie film? Ack!

As with most sequels, there are plot holes the size of an empty chest cavity. But, without a doubt, the greatest blasphemy of this film is the way they treat our beloved Zombies! They show absolutely no respect for the new and original Zombie myths created in the first film. (Examples: In PART II, the Zombies eat any and all kinds of brains, not just human. The Zombies in PART II are never consistent. At first, they stumble around, then they're running, and later, they're driving! Make up your mind!)

I don't like filmmakers fuckin' with my Zombies! First off, the makeup is way overdone. Every Zombie is a latex nightmare. Plus, a whole shitload of them are obviously wearing masks. The sequel Zombies have no personality as a group; they all look the same. (Case in point, Romero's Zombies have character!) The Zombies in PART II kinda reminded me of the TWILIGHT ZONE episode, "The Mind and the Matter," where actor Shelley Berman creates a world of people who all look just like him. Some of the Zombies even look like hand puppets, for shit's sake!



WHY IS THIS MAN DIRECTOR KEN WIEDERHORN SWELLING?



In all classic Zombie films, you'll find they didn't always use tons of makeup to make a Zombie look dead and frightening. (Look at NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, it still scares the shit out of me and most of the Zombies are just pasty-faced and dazed. Ditto for DAWN OF THE DEAD!) Plus, they knew how to act like Zombies. In the sequel, they just look like Zombies. And they make the Zombies say and do all this stupid, slapstick, dumb-ass shit! That kind of approach may look funny to the mainstream filmgoer, but it looks pitiful to the true genre lover.

And therein lies the problem with PART II. They didn't make this film for us, my DEEP RED brethren, they made this film for the masses! It seems they decided not to deal with the horror-loving audience they had established with the first film. They decided to cash in on Joe Public and family. Shame on them!

I want you to know it pains me to give you all this bad news. Chas. Balun and I spent a lovely afternoon with Producer Tom Fox and actor James Karen in September, 1986, talking about the first film. (See DEEP RED I.) They were extremely kind, gracious, and accommodating to us. It's a shame that this film will end up in that ever-growing pile of shitty follow-ups to classic films. (I could be wrong, you know. It may do well with the mainstream as a comedy. At the screening I attended, lots of people thought the film was very funny!) What fools these horrendous mortals be!

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UNCUT Slaughterhouse

BUDDY GOES HOG WILD

BY CHAS. BALUN

Here he sits, a 375 lb. man mountain of a hog butcher, in filthy overalls, ass-deep in pig shit, lovingly caressing and smoothing the ears of his pet porker. Both beast and man continue oinking and snorting contentedly in their barnyard domain, oblivious to the fact that nefarious plotting city officials are conspiring to foreclose on the property and put an end to this porcine perversity.

"Bacon and Sons: HOG SLAUGHTERING" the aging, dusty sign proclaims. But if the city has its way, it's "adios, motherfuckers." Lester Bacon and his son Buddy are holdouts from a dying era, the heyday of hog slaughtering when they were "skilled butchers, craftsmen with knives." When Lester confronts the town heavies who've always insisted he get with the times and mechanize, he snorts, "I'd never allow 30% fat! It's people like you who are clogging our young people's arteries." Gotta love this guy.

As a matter of fact, Lester and Buddy are the most colorfully eccentric, rascally cult killers to clove, club, and cooie their way into your heart of horrors in many a moon. And despite the fact that Rick Roessler's **SLAUGHTERHOUSE** introduces plot killers like obnoxious teens and snoopy cops way too early (before the credits), his demented vision of pig butchers gone "hog wild" deserves a much closer look. Where else are you going to find characters like Buddy Bacon, H.C. Hogg, and Lizzie Borden? Radio stations like KPAT, bel-lowing about their "Annual PIG OUT" to a chorus of soon-eeee's?

For those of us who believed the last word in porcine splatter was the 1985 Australian entry **RAZORBACK**, well, it's time to amend the books and Make Room for Buddy. During one dramatic, highly-charged appearance in a scene highly reminiscent of **TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE**,



JOE BANTON AS BUDDY

Buddy fills a steel-panelled doorway, wielding a 3-ft. industrial-strength meat cleaver, snorting in glee and gloating over his fallen victim.

Writer and director Rick Roessler is obviously no stranger to the Mythos of the Saw; and clever, inspired little homages to the '74 classic are liberally sprinkled throughout. Besides the rotting corpses, bone sculptures, and butcher motif, **SLAUGHTERHOUSE** displays such

CHAINSAW staples as funky music, low-camera angles, great POV shots, and wonderfully fluid camera work. In fact, the production values are all uniformly high; Roessler makes great use of moody lighting, unsettling sound FX, and nifty crane and tracking shots to keep the visuals consistently appealing.

In case you think you've seen it all before as the by-the-numbers pre-credit teenkill sequence unfolds, hang on **TIGHT**, because the credits will knock your dick into the dirt. It begins disarmingly enough—cute, bouncy musical ditty over a montage of sleeping hogs, until you realize what's really happening. You're taken on a pig's eye-view of death row! Real slaughterhouse footage is then inserted so don't expect to be able to finish your BLT afterwards. When you retrieve either your lunch or your lower jaw from your lap, you'll be ready for a debate with your conscience about vegetarianism.

Mercifully, all the rest of the butchering takes place within the safe environs of the latex-colored, Karo syrup arena. In the uncut version of **SLAUGHTERHOUSE**, there are several scenes which will indeed be trimmed to secure the film's announced "R" rating. Informed sources say many of these sequences have already had the offending frames removed and other scenes substituted for the loss of screen time. The uncensored version allows morbid wallowing in several wonderfully gratuitous shots involving a severed hand, a crushed-like-a-watermelon head, and one squealing infidel being turned slowly to sausage.

Too bad you'll probably miss all this, but don't for one minute think I enjoyed witnessing such crude, depraved behavior. It's my job, it's gotta be done, personal feelings aside.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE ain't high art, mind you. It's no **BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN**, but it's still pork flanks above the rest of the barnyard shit out there despoiling your local video shelf.

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NEWS

SLASHES

BY CHAS. BALUN

FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Empire Pictures' hi' emperor, Chas. Band, appears to be taking a healthy bite of the ol' moose flanks lately, having to sell his Italian production facilities and soundstages as well as seeing close to a dozen features shelved indefinitely, apparently considered "unreleasable" material. Boy, now if Empire says a picture sucks farts out of dead dogs, then just try to imagine how bad, how rock bottom, that is. The horror, the horror.

Now, in an ever hungry worldwide genre market, how could a modest, little cheapskate company like Empire fail to find an audience? Easy. Think **TERRORVISION**, **GHOULIES**, **DUNGEONMASTER**, **SLAVE GIRLS FROM BEYOND INFINITY**, **INTERGALACTIC GIGOLO**, **ELIMINATORS**, **METALSTORM**. Jeez! It's enough to make you wretch! Empire can take a decent concept or storyline and trash it so fast it makes your head spin.

The failure of Empire Pictures is especially frustrating because countless genre fans were hoping maybe Band could take over where Roger Corman's New World Pictures left off. Pat fucking

chance. In Empire's stable of nags, also-runs, and the terminally lame, there stood, albeit briefly, a genuine, original genre thoroughbred—Stuart Gordon. The newest, boldest, most exciting talent to settle the cages of the horror cognoscenti in quite some time. Maybe not since Tobe Hooper's desert solitaire with **"SAW"** in the summer of '74, had fans harbored such high hopes for the future of their beloved genre. Gordon's **RE-ANIMATOR** electrified even the most jaded critics, and one might even be persuaded to gush that it's as good as we've seen for a decade, at least.

FROM BEYOND and **DOLLS** completed Gordon's initial trilogy of terror and even though neither film matched **RE-ANIMATOR**'s incandescence, they failed on levels most horror filmmakers never even aspire to.

DOLLS was indifferently distributed by Empire and went nowhere fast. Next, Gordon labored on Empire's big sci-fi blockbuster-to-be, **ROBOFOX**, currently inhabiting movie limbo-land due to financial problems and incomplete stop-motion animation effects. Even though ads for this film predated **ROBOCOP** by years, by the time it's released it's going to look like yesterday's news.

Empire blew it big with *Gordon* and now they're scrambling frantically to save their asses by dumping their dregs into ancillary video markets, hiding behind labels like **WIZARD** and **URBAN CLASSICS**.

Even now, with his *Empire* crumbling about him, Band is still producing films like **CATACOMBS**, **SUBTERRANEANS**, and the proposed \$7 million epic **ARENA**, all scheduled to be shot in Rome.

Insiders feel the only feature with half a chance to lift *Empire* out of the yawning abyss of financial annihilation is the upcoming **PRISON**, co-produced with Irwin (**HALLOWEEN**) Yablons. Many lost faith years ago, knocked senseless by a steady stream of resounding clunker/how-wows; so even a roaring success with **PRISON** will do little to restore respect among the masses.

RIP *Empire* Pictures—it's about time.



SHELLADY AND GRANDMA

Brad Shellady, an enterprising lad from Taylor Ridge, Illinois, is now putting the final touches on his documentary feature, **THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE—A FAMILY PORTRAIT**. Shellady and crew recently paid a visit to the **DEEP RED** production headquarters and filmed your editor's totally biased, non-objective comments about his all-time favorite horror film. After that wrapped, the crew headed up to San Francisco for a couple of days before returning to L.A. to finish their filming with an interview with Forrest Ackerman.

The 70-minute documentary focuses on the actors who portrayed the quintessential backwoods BBQ'ing cannibal clan and features in-depth interviews with Gunnar Hansen (**Leatherface**), Ed Neal (**Hitchhiker**), Jim Siedow (**the Cook**), and John Degan (**Grandpa**). Also included is a special appearance by Robert Burns, the art director of **CHAINSAW**, who trots out several of the more memorable props from the film, in addition to supplying some colorful, behind-the-scenes anecdotes.

The feature also contains several minutes worth of footage from the 1974 classic and is framed by new sequences just recently shot at the original **CHAINSAW** family house. Of particular note is Ed Neal's animated interview, showcasing his hilarious impersonation of Tobe Hooper and some of the wildest, funniest stories you've ever heard about what it was like to actually be there, filming in 120 degree heat amidst rotting carcasses, spoiled food, and tempers laid bare by the frantic shooting schedule and set to broiling in the blast furnace Texas sun.

Shellady is now back home, heavily involved with editing the footage and expects to have everything completed in two or three months. The documentary will then be available on videotape and Shellady has promised to supply **DEEP RED** with all the details as they become available.

For more information on this project, write directly to: Brad Shellady, DoorNail Productions, 9317 142nd Street, Court West, Taylor Ridge, Illinois 61284.



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CONFESSIONS OF A MEDIA DARLING

Well now, that was the week that was. An appearance on ABC News' 20/20 program followed by a lengthy article in the Los Angeles Times and capped with a filmed interview to be included in an upcoming documentary, THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE: A FAMILY PORTRAIT.

Wowza! I was on a roll or what? These media maven's are hip to the fact that your editor loves to trot out his by now patented dog-and-pony show: SEE! The terrifying collection of FX props! THRILL! To cannibals, chainsaws and crank-blowing! BE AMAZED! Of Chasbo will talk your butt off! Need good copy! A catchy line? No problem.

The only thing is, though, these newsfolk don't know ROSEMARY's BABY from the Lindbergh baby. Oh, sure, and your old editor tried his damndest to educate the neophytes. EIGHT hours worth of interviewing and filming for 40 seconds worth of such memorable, all encompassing remarks like, "...15 murders in an hour and a half" and "So instead of the sex act, they insert a killing, a murder..." Shit-oo-ee! Anybody who watched knew the 10- and 12-year-olds they talked to got all the best lines. Who cares, though? It was all worth it to hear Baba say, "Howwow" and to witness those fat-assed housefraus they filmed watching MAKE THEM DIE SLOWLY, squirming in their seats, shrieking, "I never knew my kids were into this...this mutilation...Ugh!"

Or, how 'bout impeccably groomed news-dons Bob Brown solemnly intoning, "Yes, I'm standing just a few yards from where Billy-Bob McPorker savagely beat, then strangled his girl friend after drinking beer and watching FACES OF DEATH." I must've missed the sequence in the film where a drunk, fat asshole attacks and kills his sweetheart. Maybe it was the Kosher killing techniques shown in the slaughterhouse segment that really set him off. Who knows? Cow = girl friend. Priest and executioner = drunk duckface. Put 'em together and whadda ya got? Mighty hot copy, yes?

Anyway, your editor fared much better with the Los Angeles Times. (A paper, my publisher was quick to point out, which has the fifth largest circulation in the world.) Whoo-ah!

They let me have my say, alright, but the writer said, "You might expect a 6'5", 240 lb. giant, obsessed with horror films, to at least appear sinister. You would be wrong." (Gulp! Here it comes...) "With red beard and rosy cheeks, Balan looks more like a Santa." Oh, my, my! Please.

One of the photos also shows a smiling dipshit of a lame-o clutching a coffee cup ringed with Christmas penguins, looking like he just stepped off the last green after a brisk 18 holes with Bob Hope. And this photo is perched atop a chart, listing my ten favorite horror films, including such lines describing ZOMBIE: "Best use of an eyeball and a 14 1/2" splinter." Yeh, sez who? This guy with the stupid, shit-eating grin, "the fishing hat," and the cute penguin cup? Oh well, trust me. I've burned the outfit, tossed the outzy-pue cup, reclaimed my heavily stained butcher's apron from the bottom drawer, and vowed to cut the ass-kissing, talkshow shit and get back to some real red-blooded work again.

Oh well, "it's all in the can" now and everybody came away with what they wanted, I guess. They got their media fodder for some good clean fill dirt to help round out another dreary newsway filled with reports of frustrated arms talks, terrorist kidnappings, governmental chicanery, a wobbly stock market, and mondo-gonzo attacks in the Persian Gulf. Your editor got what he wanted, too. Big strokes for a big ego. But really, I was another disposable "celebrity" trying to nail down a portion of the average "newshound's" fleeting, 3-minute attention span.

Besides, an early A.M. phone call the day the article appeared helped put everything back into perspective. "Good morning," the calm, sweet-sounding lady's voice said. "Is this Chas. Balun?" "Yes it is."

"I hope you burn in hell!" she screamed and slung down the receiver.

I must be doing something right. My conscience is clear.

EURO-GORE



Once again, DEEP RED's roving European correspondent, Hennie Vredevelde, has some encouraging news for splatter fans, both foreign and domestic.

Prolific Dutch writer/director/cinematographer Wim Vink (DEEP RED I) is back with DANCE MACABRE, a film billed as "the ultimate exper-

WIM VINK'S DANCE MACABRE



PHOTO: HANS MEIJER

ience in horror." His latest effort, HALF PAST MIDNIGHT, is loaded with gore FX and Hennie promises he'll update his report next issue and keep DEEP RED readers informed about Holland's "best hardcore gore director."

NECROMANTIC, a German splitter film with good advance word (and a sick poster), is set to premier at Berlin's famous Sputnik Theatre. Directed by Jörg Buttgereit from a screenplay by Franz Rodenkirchen (who also handles special makeup FX), this promising depravity is, in Hennie's words, "the story of a boy who's working at a cemetery, his love for dead people, and his jealous girl friend."

Vredevelde also reports that THOU SHALT NOT KILL...EXCEPT (with Sam Raimi) is fast becoming the cult hit of the year over there. (Isn't it our turn now? I mean, Sam's a local guy, right?)

MARIO & VITTORIO
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THE ROAD, directed by Jim Riffel, with FX by Bruce Spaulding Fuller (See "New Blood") and Erik Schaper with Ed French (consultant), is currently in post-production, after wrapping principal photography in the town of Cherry Valley, New York last Halloween.

It's about "a crumbling old mansion with its equally crumbling old occupant loose on a spree of toolbox terror." Crew members are calling it "an interesting EVIL DEAD/FRIDAY THE 13TH variation with lots of humor and buckets of grue. We literally painted the walls with blood."

In post-production from Jewel Productions is BRAINS FOR BEAUTY (a.k.a. THE REJUVINATRIX), produced by Steve (NEON MANIACS, DEADTIME STORIES) Mackler and directed by Brian Jones. Once again, the FX are handled by Ed French, Bruce Spaulding Fuller, and Erik Schaper.

Mutated rats with a taste for human flesh are involved in some laboratory hi-jinks as a scientist discovers a "youth serum" synthesized from the brains of humans. Features DNA dilemmas, beheadings, evolutionary sex, and lots and lots of BRAINS! says the press kit. Okay by me!

Dario Argento's latest, OPERA, opened in Italian theaters right around Christmas time to mixed (actually) reviews. Critics gave it high marks for its "sumptuous sets and above average wide-screen lensing," but were less impressed with Argento's wild camera set-ups, the lack of plot, and his continued reliance on the ubiquitous black-gloved killer.

When a pretty, young understudy gets a chance at singing *Lady Macbeth*, her inspired performance brings down the house and precipitates the murder of an usher by the gloved one.

Apparently, the killer's real pleasure involves taping needles under people's eyes and forcing them to watch him butcher their lovers. *Daily Variety* says, "While a rock score runs riot, scenes push on past the limits of nausea (Oh-Oh!), including such delights as the masked murderer extracting a bracelet from one victim's esophagus with the help of a pair of shears."

Sounds like vintage Argento to us, but don't hold your breath waiting for its U.S. theatrical release. When's the last time you saw an Argento film on the big screen?

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The **COMBAT SHOCK**

Treatment



In this era of mall multi-theatres and the despicable reign of the MPAA (and the remnants of their "R" rating), confrontist (as opposed to "escapist") films have become a rare item. You used to stumble into confrontist horrors with surprising frequency during the late '60's and early '70's at the drive-ins...films that were genuinely disturbing, projecting our deepest, most unspoken fears onto a screen bigger than a barn. The next haven, as the drive-ins dwindled into the oblivion of real estate and parking lots, were the midnight movies—the witching hour—and these films (EL

TOPO, THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW, PINK FLAMINGOS, ERASERHEAD) plummeted depths and explored extremes that would have burned the paint off the drive-in screen. Alas, the midnight show also faded, co-opted into another shopping mall haven for the odder mainstream non-hits and rock operas. Currently, the home video revolution has re-opened Pandora's Box: anyone able to sort through the deluge of often gaudy boxes and misleading retitling of already unknown films can still stumble onto the occasional surprise: confrontist horror films for

the 1980's—a considerably nafter, unnerving, and endangered breed.

As much as I enjoy entertaining horrors like RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD, ALIEN/ALIENS, or the films of Carpenter, Craven, and Argento, it is the occasional confrontational horror film—those that dare to "show the unshowable and speak the unspeakable" (in the words of David Cronenberg)—that keep me on the lookout, searching through countless obscurities, viewing hours upon hours of film. These confrontist rarities are the films that momentarily break



SEMI-NUDITY, BUT YOUR CLEANING CREDIT CANNOT BE REFUSED

through the desensitized pop culture glaze with terrifying clarity and power, staking out new territory or reinvigorating fallow ground, reminding us why horror films are called "horror films." These are films that are generally despised, later considered "ahead of their time," only because it takes time for those to find (or be found by) their audience, and another few years for the mainstream to acknowledge, accept, and absorb their imagery and impact.

This past year, amid all the unfunny horror comedies and cartoony, toothless wonders (and the occasional good movie), only two films really struck a nerve in me. The first was Clive Barker's *HELLRAISER*, most of all for its disturbing revelation of the "love of pain" implicit in religious (specifically Catholic) belief, culminating in the genuinely horrifying spectacle of Frank (Andy Robinson) having his face stretched apart, exclaiming "Jesus...wept" as his tongue falls in perverse savoring of his agony before the Cenobites pull his flesh

explosively asunder. For audiences unfamiliar with Barker's extraordinary horror fiction, *HELLRAISER* presented the vision of a new filmmaker, willing and able to "play for keeps." For those of us familiar with Barker's writing, it confirmed his ability to translate his vision to the screen with the same volatile, graphic urgency he brings to the page.

The second film was a completely unknown quantity, appearing on the video shelves not as a horror film (which it definitely is), but as a war film amongst all the Stallone, Schwarzenegger, Bronson, and Eastwood action/adventure/vigilante epics. *COMBAT SHOCK* proved not only to be the absolute antithesis of the war-mangling garbage it was hidden among, but one of the most harrowing and painfully honest horror films I have seen in years.

Before I continue, I urge the reader to see *COMBAT SHOCK* for yourself before reading this article. In discussing the film fully, key story

elements will be unavoidably revealed. So GO ON...find it, rent it, and see it.

Proceed at your own risk...

Like so many of the genuinely confrontist horror films, *COMBAT SHOCK* seemingly came out of nowhere, unknown and unannounced. While some confrontist horrors do emerge from major studios and/or directors (*PEEPING TOM*, *PSYCHO*, *THE DEVILS*, *TAXI DRIVER*), most of these groundbreakers are first features, realized with little money, fanfare, or "polish." Indeed, they gain much of their immediacy and power from their necessarily rough and ready, lean origins. Though the popularity of horror films and the promise of easy profits from minimal budgets often may determine the filmmakers' decision to work within the genre, one always feels that these are films they needed to make, perhaps as cathartic for the director as for the audience.



JIMMY (MR. INTERVIEWS) MAY

A few titles spring instantly to mind, their origins decidedly outside of the mainstream. Some of these, like James Landis' *THE SADIST* (a.k.a. *THE PROFILE OF TERROR*, 1963), remain obscure and difficult to see today, undone by their low budgets, shoddy distribution, and unpleasant intensity. Others, however, have become recognized as classics, often earning megabucks at the box office (little or none of which reaches its creators, often lost in frustrating labyrinths of legal entanglements, mafia-bait or otherwise unscrupulous distribution, etc.). *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* emerged from Pittsburgh; *THE WITCHFINDER GENERAL*/*THE CONQUEROR WORM* an unlikely hybrid of AIP's Price-and-Poe cycle and Britain's Tigon studio, helmed by an angry young director in his twenties; *LAST HOUSE ON THE*

LEFT was the first film by a university professor working with a producer and distributors coping from the peen market. An unruly group of Texas longhair film students spawned *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE*; while the stodgy American Film Institute financed a debut feature by a former painter/sculptor, *ERASERHEAD*, Canadian government money went into *THEY CAME FROM WITHIN*, raising the hackles of the outraged dignitaries of Parliament even as it made more money than any other Canadian film in history!

I would add *COMBAT SHOCK* to this list. It is as primal and subversive as any of the films I have just mentioned, hardly the sort of "fun" thriller entertainment the mainstream critics tend to champion as being representative of the cream of the independents. (They canonized *HALLOWEEN*, which I deliberately have excluded from this

list. It was a well-crafted shocker, independently made and enormously successful—as was Sam Raimi's visceral *THE EVIL DEAD*—but it hardly broke any new ground or presented a unique and personal vision.) Buddy Giovinazzo's first feature is a gritty, uncompromising cry of pain and desperation, an overwhelming depiction of one man's hell, made and told on Buddy's home turf—Staten Island. While Manhattan's self-proclaimed "Cinema of Transgression" movement (including the works of filmmakers Nick Zedd, Richard Kern, Lung Leg, Tommy Turner, and others) fostered in its own depravity (little of it simulated, mind you), Buddy G. chose to transcend the limitations of making short films and make his first feature. Though his aim was to make a "festival film," (hopefully playing at prestigious film festivals and leading to future work as a director), Buddy eschewed the anecdotal and/or abstract nature of his short films to instead construct a tightly-wound narrative about a Vietnam vet's last day on Earth.

COMBAT SHOCK (originally entitled AMERICAN NIGHTMARES) didn't begin as a horror film, or even as a feature, for that matter. As a student at the College of Staten Island, Buddy had already directed a number of short films that were distinctly grotesque and perversely humorous. AMERICAN NIGHTMARES began as a four-page screenplay for another short film, in which a destitute Vietnam veteran goes out in a fruitless search for a job, only to return home to his family and, in despair, kill them and himself. There was nothing funny about this one and Buddy knew it. His inspiration lay in numerous news items he noticed with alarming frequency in the newspapers: "I wasn't looking for them, but they kept jumping out at me...I also noticed that they often involved Vietnam vets." As he began to collect clippings headlined "Viet vet kills self in forest," "Lose job and lose home and now lose their lives," "Murder/suicide of couple and son," and "Beaten boy is put in oven," the manner in which the tabloids trivialized such tragic stories became more and more disturbing, and the projected film became more important to Buddy. Vicariously putting himself into the personal and family crises that led to such frequent murder/suicides, threads common to each tragedy began to suggest a fuller story. His goal was to put himself and his audience into the mind of one such fictional character, with all the emotional intensity and honesty possible. A short film would trivialize the experience, just as the tabloid brief did. In the newspapers, "we learn nothing about why these things happened, nothing about these people," Buddy says. Based upon his own research and interviews with 'Nam veterans, and consciously drawing from the atmosphere and elements he so admired in Martin Scorsese's urban nightmares (particularly TAXI DRIVER) and David Lynch's ERASERHEAD, Buddy began work upon AMERICAN NIGHTMARES in earnest.

"I wanted to do what John Waters and John Sayles had done—make a personal independently made film that would play the film festivals and, hopefully, lead to backing for another feature, or even commercial work as a director,"



BRIAN POWELL APPLIES HEAD SQUIB

Buddy recalls. Waters, in fact, played a decisive role in Buddy's working up the confidence to make AMERICAN NIGHTMARES. Writing to John Waters about his planned feature, Buddy was gratified to receive a very supportive reply from the notorious director of PINK FLAMINGOS urging Buddy to make his film...his own way. "If it wasn't for him, I doubt I would have attempted it."

Filming began in the summer of '82, with a crew of four (Buddy was his own cameraman until Stella Varveris later joined the crew as cinematographer) using 16mm Bolex equipment borrowed from CSI. The prelude's Vietnam footage was shot first, with the swamp lands next to a landfill and the Staten Island Mall serving as the jungles of 'Nam. Buddy's homebase in Port Richmond provided all the blighted, graffiti-covered urban landscapes used in the film. As shooting progressed, toward the end of filming in '83, a busy day would find 10 people on the crew, most of them recruited from CSI's film classes.



NICKY G. BLEEDS

Costing the film was initially difficult. "You tell people you're making a film and they become suspicious if they haven't heard of you." Buddy's brother, Rick (one year younger than Buddy), essayed the central role of Frank, spending a full year with the filming since he appears in almost every scene. Another CSI student, Veronica Stark, played his shrewish wife, Cathy, while the rest of the cast came out of local community theatre productions (including Jim Cooney as



the interrogator in 'Nam, Leo Lunnay as Frank's father in a fine performance, and Mitch Maglio, an old high school friend of Buddy's who not only plays dealer/pimp Paco in *AMERICAN NIGHTMARES*, but also appears as the murderous cakehead in the promo reel for *JONATHAN OF THE NIGHT*. Buddy's wife, Laura Labar, also appears in the film as the hooker who gets slapped by the black pimp. Given the tight budget of the film, few of these people were paid for their work, most of them eager to do it for the experience.

As filming progressed, money was a constant headache. Buddy raised, borrowed, and earned (teaching film-making as an adjunct professor at CSI) the film's \$40,000 budget, a remarkably low figure for a color feature in the '80's. Consider the fact that Jerry Warren and Virgil Vogel's *INVASION OF THE ANIMAL PEOPLE*, a black-and-white, 73-minute science fiction film made in 1958, also cost \$40,000 to make (in 1958 dollars, mind you!) and you have some yardstick to judge

Buddy G's accomplishment by. Local newspaper coverage of *AMERICAN NIGHTMARES* in '84 gave a budget of \$60,000; this deceit was intentional as John Waters had advised Buddy to give a higher figure to reporters and interested distributors. "Whatever you spend, double it," Waters suggested. Ironically, after the \$10-20,000 Buddy spent in '84 and '85 for travel and marketing his feature in search of a distributor, the \$40,000 figure is correct.

The junkie sequences were done as realistically as the rest of the film, based upon personal observation (there are plenty of junkies on Staten Island, y'know). The harrowing sequence in which Mike (Mike Tierno) uses a coat hanger to rip open his arm and tries to cram the (poisoned) hit Paco solid him into his vein was based upon a friend's story. "He lived on the East Side and his apartment window faced an abandoned lot where the junkies used to go to shoot up. He saw it out his back window—this guy using a coat hanger." An additional

horrific detail was added to the scene on the spot, as the makeup crew quickly made a fake fetus to place under the coat hanger to suggest its use in an abortion (ugh!). "It doesn't read on the film," Buddy adds, somewhat thankfully. As it is, this sequence provoked a mass walk-out when the film was screened at the '84 Independent Feature Film Market in New York City. "It was just too brutal. There was a mass exodus, about 80 people just up and left the screening."

The apartment Buddy rented to use as Frank and Cathie's rundown dwelling in the film had just been repainted and fixed up by the landlord prior to the filming. Praising the owner they wouldn't ruin the place, Buddy and Ralph Cordero II proceeded to use latex on the walls to make the place look suitably grungy. The latex would peel off, no problem; but when ink was added in spots to suggest stains, the renovated walls were ruined. Additionally, the filming of the final bloodbath—as Frank shoots

his wife, their child, and himself—drenched the rooms and ceilings with stage blood. "After we were out of there, the landlord cleaned and cleaned the place, still this blood would seep up from between the tiles and floorboards. He's still pissed off about it!", Buddy says. Fair warning for all independent filmmakers...and their landlords.

After filming was completed, Ricky and Buddy spent another full year on post-production editing and sound. The nine months spent working on the 18 track (!) soundtrack and musical score (all of which was composed and completed by Rick, along with the completely synthesized sound effects) resulted in one of the most densely layered and carefully crafted soundtracks for a horror film since...well, ERASERHEAD. In fact, Lynch's perennial sound technician, Alan Splet, was indeed their inspiration, along with their determination to offset AMERICAN NIGHTMARES' low budget origins with a polished soundtrack ("poor sound gives the budget away every time"). Ricky G's musical score is memorable, and as Buddy says, "fully captures the inner mind of the character" (Frank). Their father invested another \$5,000 into the production for the completion of the sound mix. Buddy adds, "my family have always been very supportive. My father would come down and serve sandwiches and food to the cast and crew during filming. They'd prefer I made TERMS OF ENDEARMENT or something, but they're always there when I need them."

Along with music and effects, the sound for the everplaying television set Cathey "watches" (there's never any picture on the set, just static) was recorded and added to the soundtrack. It provides much of the film's black humor, with most of the "TV shows" being Buddy and his wife Laura performing the parts. At one point, we hear a bit inspired by the old Carol Burnett/Harvey Korman skits ("Oh, Marshall!", "Oh, John!" building to an orgasmic crescendo). As the climax kicks into gear, we hear a parody of a 1950's monster movie that punctuates the scene as Frank, beaten, bloody, and over-the-edge, steps into the light (the TV dialogue screams, "Oh, God! Look at its face—it's so ugly!"). This sardonic byplay with the TV pays off as Frank sits in front of the set, and it begins to talk directly to him. ("The only massacre you saw was the one you started. You were the one who went crazy, not your squad! You flipped out and shot everybody—even your own men!") before it explodes, triggering Frank's final flashback and the purge that follows. Also notable is the moment when Cathey tunes the set into a bit of dialogue from Alfred Hitchcock's MARNIE (1964), reflecting Cathey's own self-loathing and sexual disgust. "The only way you can help me is to leave me alone. Can't you understand? I cannot bear to be handled!", Marnie (Tippi Hedren) says. "I didn't want to get married—it's degrading. It's animal," she adds, at which point Buddy cuts to a shot of the hideously deformed infant, wailing in its crib.

LEIF "THE LEG BOY" VETLAND



The prior three months spent editing the raw footage into its final running time went fairly quickly, as there were no optical or special effects involved (beyond the occasional use of slow-motion, also done in-camera during shooting). The one sequence that might traditionally utilize optical effects, Frank's "flashbacks" in the climax, were again done simply and effectively during the filming: the "Nam footage was projected directly onto actor Ricky G's face and filmed live. Other films have done this before, but always the contrivance of showing the actor in conjunction with the actual film projector within the context of the scene. Ash in the mysterious "projection room" in Sam Raimi's THE EVIL DEAD, and there is a similar sequence in DEATH SHIP. In AMERICAN NIGHTMARES, the device is used cinematically in a "purer" manner, as a visible expression/projection of the character's interior mental imagery. We see the images play over his features even as the character sees them in his mind's eye.

Upon the completion of AMERICAN NIGHTMARES in October of '84, Buddy began to actively seek a proper showcase and distributor for his film. Despite CSI's active participation in the filming, especially via the use of the college's equipment, they laid no claims on the film itself, a point of controversy at other film schools. (For instance, since Carpenter and O'Bannon's DARK STAR, USC claims ownership of all films produced there, as does the American Film Institute since Lynch's ERASERHEAD "escaped" them.) It should be noted, however, that the budget, film stock, and final lab work were secured without CSI's backing.

Buddy watched the first print at his home, horrified at the terrible condition of the print. (This was prior to the final lab work, in which the use of "liquid gate" and excellent blow-up from 16mm to 35mm resulted in a fine answer print of the film.) He went back and cut a few shots that showed Frank wandering the urban squalor (When asked what he would cut now, Buddy says he would "trim the film down to 85 minutes, cutting from the apartment scenes and the



scener in the unemployment line and office. The last half hour is still perfect in my mind.") before renting a local nightclub for a night for the official premiere of the film for friends, family, cast and crew. It was well received, and later showings to college audiences (as well as *Gore Gazette's* screenings at "The Dive" in Manhattan) also proved successful, reaffirming Buddy's notion that the film "should have been screened as a Midnight movie." "The young audiences respond vocally to the black humor in the film," he says. "The dripping faucet, the baby, they get into it. When Frank first gets up and breaks his shoelace, they howl. They get into the character and identify with him, but appreciate the little touches of humor that get you through the ordeal."

His hopes for *AMERICAN NIGHTMARES* as a festival film that might launch further feature films, however, were quickly dashed. "It's been tough, real tough," he says. *AMERICAN NIGHTMARES'* explicit violence and shattering, downbeat subject matter rubbed most film festival officials the wrong way; the feature

was thrown out of over 50 film festivals, including the prestigious Lincoln Center "New Directors/New Films" event, the same year the Coen Brothers' *BLOOD SIMPLE* was such a hit. *BLOOD SIMPLE* also eclipsed *AMERICAN NIGHTMARES* when it was shown at the 1984 Independent Feature Film Market. Though Buddy and Ricky did meet the Coen Bros. at the festival and got along famously ("meeting them was like looking in a mirror," Buddy recalls), they couldn't help but be disappointed by the poor reception their own film received. It was just a taste of what was to come, culminating in a 1985 showing at a Paris film festival that almost turned into a riot, so vehement was the audience's response. *AMERICAN NIGHTMARES* circulated in search of a distributor, through New Line, Sandy Howard, Orion, Orion Classics, UA Classics, and Infinitum...with nothing but negative (often aspy) response.

Ironically, the first distributor to see the film ended up picking up the film exactly one year later. One of the grips on *AMERICAN NIGHTMARES* had talked about the film with Richard Haines (director of *SPLAT-*

TER UNIVERSITY and *CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH*) at Troma, who requested a screening. Haines saw the film before anyone outside of the filmmakers' circle, unfortunately, he disliked the film and told Buddy Troma wasn't interested. Much later on, Lloyd Kaufman (who heads Troma along with Michael Herz) saw *AMERICAN NIGHTMARES* and he loved it. Buddy signed on with Troma October of '85.

"I thought it was a gloomy, profound, absolutely strong, incredible movie," Kaufman says. "I can't imagine how the critics missed the point of the film. A little time goes by and people are now saying, 'Ya, that film was pretty daring. That was something to do. That was amazing. That is an interesting way to look at the Vietnam War instead of glorifying it.' There may be a lot more truth to *COMBAT SHOCK* than to *PLATOON*." When asked about the graphic violence in the film, which led to extensive cuts to satisfy the MPAA prior to Troma's theatrical release of the film, Kaufman adds, "It definitely shows a more responsible use of violence than any of the rest of Troma's films." Kaufman's

genuine enthusiasm for the picture, despite its lack of promise as a commercial success, led to Troma's acquiring **AMERICAN NIGHTMARES**.

Resisting the film **COMBAT SHOCK** (due to the existence of another film entitled **AMERICAN NIGHTMARE**), Troma paid off Buddy's debt with the print lab and cut a deal that included a nice advance and Buddy's retaining ownership of the film itself. Despite Rick Sullivan's accusations against Troma in his *Gore Gazette* No. 87 review of the film, Buddy maintains his satisfaction with Troma's handling of the film. "They kept me informed every step of the way. I didn't have power of approval or veto, but they were very good to deal with," he says. Troma's own print of the film shows very minimal tinkering with Buddy's original. The MPAA, however, required Troma to butcher the picture prior to its limited theatrical release.

Repackaged and promoted as **COMBAT SHOCK** to cash in on the popularity of **RAMBO** and its ilk, the film failed to do well, with only scattered distribution in the western states, and a couple of weeks play in the NY/NJ exploitation circuit. The posters and trailers played it up as a vigilante/war actioner (as does Trium's release of the film on video). The preview compliments a montage of the film's explicit horrors and violence with "Frankie tried to stand up to the scum, but he found life in the street more treacherous than the jungles of Vietnam. More macho than **RAMBO**, more terror than **THE TERMINATOR**, more gut-wrenching violence than **COMMANDO**. An explosive film you'll never forget!" All true enough, but it hardly prepared the action audience for the utterly depressing portrait of urban angst and despair that is at the heart of **COMBAT SHOCK**. If word of mouth was poor, the reviews even worse. "Unless you're a freak for diabolically bad low budget movies, avoid this one...crawls along like a caterpillar moseying across a maple leaf on a hot day," said *Newsday*; "pure schlock," said the *New York Post*; while the *Daily News* and *The New York Times* were a bit more positive, Carby at the *Times* damned it as being "passion-

ately, sincerely misguided" even as he acknowledged its "breath-taking primitivism." Even the usually receptive *Esquire* gave a cold shoulder, refusing to even mention the film, despite Buddy's and Troma's solicitations.

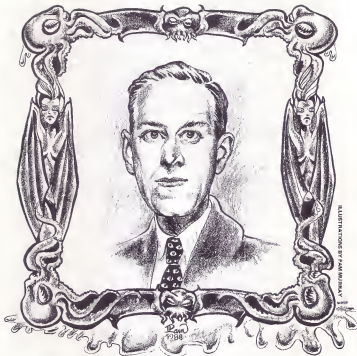
Jay Mieder at the *Daily News* added that "this particular tragic plight-of-our-Vietnam-veteran riff strangled on its own banality years ago." I have the clippings Buddy sent me copies of in front of me. "Vet Kills Wife, Children" and "Six Dead After Viet Vet's Rampage." Oh, how banal. The newspapers continue to trivialize the horror, even as mainstream films, from made-for-TV travesties to theatrical features that portray the vet as rampaging, misunderstood monster (**TO KILL A CLOWN**, **FIRST BLOOD**, **RAMBO**) or tragic outsider coming to terms with his lot in life (**COMING HOME**, **THE DEER HUNTER**, **GARDENS OF STONE**), gloss over the pain with Hollywood stars and glitz. Just after Buddy completed **AMERICAN NIGHTMARES**, the press began to use a term that sums up the condition

in a single phrase: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is characterized as producing "nightmares, vivid flashbacks of painful memories, acute panic attacks, chronic startle reactions, and a proclivity toward violent aggressiveness." Whatever its shortcomings, **COMBAT SHOCK** does not trivialize its subject, making the audience share in its character's own breakdown with hallucinogenic immediacy and impact. It is violent, harrowing, and unpleasant as it should be. It pulls no punches. It offers no solutions, but that was not Buddy's intent. He wished to portray its horrors with unflinching clarity, so that we would share his own horror, outrage, and anger.

Seeing **COMBAT SHOCK**, we do. As Michael Reeves did with **THE WITCH-FINDER GENERAL**, as Wes Craven did with **LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT**, as with Romero and Cravenberg and others, Buddy Glasvinazzo has used the "ghetto" of independent filmmaking in a maligned genre to speak the unspeakable and show the unshowable.



BLOOD BROTHERS BUDDY AND RICKY G.



LOVECRAFT LIVES!

Father Re-Animator

BY DENNIS DANIEL



"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown. These facts few psychologists will dispute, and their admitted truth must establish for all time the genuineness and dignity of the weirdly horrible tale as a literary form."



Thus begins H. P. Lovecraft's essay, "Supernatural Horror in Literature." In just two sentences, HPL establishes credibility for all horror tale lovers. (My DEEP RED brothers and sisters...how many times have we taken it across the chin by the unanointed for our love of the bizarre? Well, the next time someone calls you a sicko, read this Lovecraft quote to them.)

Who was H. P. Lovecraft? To be honest, I had never seen one of his books or heard of him until I saw the film RE-ANIMATOR. It had such a terrific impact on me that I had to find out what HPL was all about. I went to the local bookshop; but, to my surprise, they didn't have anything by Lovecraft. "H. P. who?," they said.

Then, one day, I was browsing around at Forbidden Planet, the ultimate science fiction bookshop in New York, and I discovered three hard-bound volumes of HPL's work published by Arkham House—At the Mountains of Madness, The Dunwich Horror and Others, and Dagon and Other Macabre Tales. All total, there were over 55 stories! I proceeded to dig in and became immediately hooked on Lovecraft.

H. P. Lovecraft is one of the greatest authors of supernatural horror and fiction in the twentieth century. What's even more amazing is he's been dead for over 50 years! In all that time, no one has come close to matching the wide variety of story-lines, bizarre characters, and weird tales created by H. P. Lovecraft. (My last statement is, of course, debatable; but I firmly believe it to be true.) His name is often mentioned in the same breath as Edgar Allen Poe's (his idol); and there are many who believe he is greater than Poe. One thing is for sure, in the short 47 years that HPL walked this Earth, he created a body of work that has stood the test of time.



Howard Phillips Lovecraft was born August 20, 1890 in Providence, Rhode Island. Since he was a sickly child, Lovecraft spent a great deal of his early life at home, where he read voraciously. (His grandfather had a vast library.) He digested all the classics and found a particular fondness for Edgar Allen Poe. He also liked to dabble with science and chemistry and even began writing his own horror stories. He was subject to terrifying nightmares that were recurrent. He used to dream of "night-giants," which he described in his later years as "black, lean, rubbery things with horns, barbed tails, bat wings, and no faces at all." (Pretty heavy stuff for a 7-year-old!)

Lovecraft's early childhood wasn't very pleasant. Although he was born into a seemingly wealthy family in a stable environment, the coming of the new century saw the family fortune depleting. The family business, a land and irrigation company, suffered tremendous financial ruin when a series of natural disasters destroyed several dams built by the company. Lovecraft's father went insane and died when HPL was 8-years-old.

As a result, he was brought up by his mother, who was extremely over-protective of her son and babied him to no end. (Even while his father was alive, his mother would let his hair grow long and had him wearing dresses!) It is believed by many Lovecraftians that this poor upbringing had a profound effect on Lovecraft in his later years and contributed to his overall reclusive nature. His mother also eventually went insane and he spent almost the rest of his life living with his aunts. Although it would seem that no good could come from this lifestyle, Lovecraft beat the odds of becoming a bona fide loony by channeling his energy and imagination towards writing.

He would write about all his hobbies—science, poetry, astronomy, and chemistry. But the subject he delighted in the most was the supernatural. Eventually, HPL became an amateur journalist. He would write for many different amateur journals around the country and even published his own called The Conservative. Lovecraft also was a member and sometime office holder in the United Amateur Press Association.

By the late '20s, HPL was becoming a very good writer, blending into his work the styles and themes of all his favorite authors. Like any good writer, HPL eventually found his own style and by 1920, he had produced his first mini-masterpiece, "The Outsider." This short story was very autobiographical in nature. It's all about this creature who has been living alone in a huge castle his whole life. When he finally enters the outside world, people flee in terror at the sight of him; an act the creature can't understand. It is only when he finally sees his own reflection in a mirror that he realizes he looks like death. (Lovecraft had always considered himself an ugly man.)

As the years went by, Lovecraft continued to improve. Some of his best short stories from the early 1900's include: "Dagon," "Beyond the Wall of Sleep," "From Beyond," and "The Tomb." In time, Lovecraft submitted his work to the famous PULP magazine Weird Tales, which widened his audience and gave him his first (and regrettably, his only) taste of success in his short lifetime.

I want to make this clear...as great a writer as Lovecraft was, he was also one strange dude. In his personal life, he lived in the past. He imagined himself a cultured old English gentleman, and he played that part his whole life. He wore old clothes from the 1800's at the young age of 30, he referred to himself as an "Old Man" and "Grandpa." He was a firm believer in a superior Arian race, and considered himself one of them. When he eventually got married, he spent more time away from his wife than with her. In fact, he would have been perfectly happy just having a letter writing relationship with her. He was obsessed with his home

town of Providence, Rhode Island and could never stand to be away from it too long. (Although he did travel frequently in his later years.)

Perhaps the strangest and saddest thing about HPL was his attitude towards writing. Since he believed that a true "gentleman" would never earn his living by writing fiction, Lovecraft wasted years of his life and talent ghostwriting for others and revising others' literary attempts. This was how he earned his meager earning. (Houdini was one of his clients.)

On the positive side, Lovecraft wrote freely and creatively from his heart. He didn't write to please the masses, he wrote to please himself. This gives all of his work a stunning sense of originality and freshness. It's amazing to read his collection of stories, "Herbert West - Re-Animator," with all kinds of sick, depraved goings on...all in a story written way back in 1921! (The short stories are quite different from the film, but are bizarre just the same.) Because HPL had a firm background in the sciences, his macabre tales of science and nature gone haywire have a ring of truth to them. (Check out "The Colour Out of Space.") Many critics chastise Lovecraft for his excessive use of adjectives to describe his images of horror, but I find it engaging and within the spirit of creative experimentation. (For you zombie lovers, he deals with cannibalism in "The Rats in the Walls" written in 1923!)

One of Lovecraft's greatest achievements was his creation of an entire mythology, referred to after his death as his "Cthulhu Mythos." HPL wrote a number of stories that tell of a group of "Gods,"



Eldritch beings who come from other worlds and inhabited the Earth long before man. Remnants of these past civilizations can still be found on Earth in remote, hard-to-find locations and their spirits still have an effect on many of his characters. He created strange names like Yuggoth, Cthulhu, and Azathoth, with an equally strange language. He also created the concept of a mystical book of spells and incantations called the Necronomicon, written by the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred. To find out more about Lovecraft's pseudomyst universe, read "The Call of Cthulhu," "The Shadow Out of Time," and "At the Mountains of Madness," just to name a few. (There is always a tremendous debate going on among Lovecraftians as to which stories actually encompass the "Cthulhu Mythos.")

Not only was Lovecraft an excellent fiction writer, he's also one of the greatest epistolarians of all time. Lovecraft probably wrote over 100,000 letters in his lifetime! He wrote to all his amateur journalist friends and became a father figure and guiding light to many future great writers (Robert Bloch among them. Even Forrest J Ackerman wrote to Lovecraft!) There are five volumes alone of Lovecraft letters, published by Arkham House.

By the time of his death from cancer (a death he could have prevented had he gone to the doctor at the first signs of trouble) in 1937, Lovecraft was a little-known, but well-respected supernatural story writer. Except for his stories published in *Weird Tales*, he never received the recognition he deserved. It wasn't until two of his friends, August Derleth and Donald Wandrei, created their own publishing company, Arkham House (named after a fictional Lovecraft town) that Lovecraft's work was finally opened for the world to see in book form.

In the annals of supernatural literature, the name H. P. Lovecraft will always reside right next to Edgar Allen Poe as one of the genre's most original and beloved writers. Read his work, it is superb!



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NEW BLOOD



INTRODUCING THREE NEW FX ARTISTS...

BY CHAS. BALUN

As promised in our premier issue of DEEP RED, this new feature will become a regular part of our magazine, showcasing the up-and-coming talents of a new generation of FX artists.

The response to our announcement in Issue 1 has been very encouraging and we will continually attempt to bring our readers the latest FX talents who haven't been given their due respects. As you'll soon see, their work is mighty damned impressive; and its our fervent hope that by publishing their portfolios, perhaps they'll get that break they've been looking for.

Hopefully, too, you'll be inspired by what you see and maybe encouraged just enough to send in some of your own work for future issues.

Welcome, if you will then, three new blood brothers, ones whose work you'll soon be seeing oozing forth from a theater screen near you.



THE FLOPPY GUY CORPSE

TIM LARSEN

This enterprising FX artist lives near San Diego, California, and has been sculpting, casting, and painting creatures for as long as he can remember.

"As a youngster, I would sit for hours," Larsen recalls, "Detailing an Aurora model kit of Gillman or the Forgotten Prisoner of Castemere. The Creature being my favorite monster of all time."

After an initial period working with water-based clay, Larsen discovered liquid latex and "would make cuts, burns, and wounds on myself and friends. I built corpse arms out of newspaper and foam and coated them with latex."

NEW BLOOD

Larsen continued on with his experimentations, trying different approaches and picking up a tip or two from magazines such as *Cinefax* and *Cinefantastique*, until he found the book he'd always been searching for. "When I came across Tom Savini's book *Grand Illusions*," he says, "I went crazy. He showed sculptures, molds, head impressions—all the things I'd been learning on my own."

And sometimes, as Larsen readily admits, solutions to design problems often come from unlikely sources. "My dentist was a great help," he says. "He got me my first Alginate and dental acrylic for fangs. I was on my way. I sculpted masks and prosthetics. I made monster teeth, horror props, things like dead rodents," Larsen explains. "My friends became regular victims of head impressions, old age prosthetics, bloody stumps, and countless other makeups."

When the producers at American Artists placed an ad in a local newspaper reading, "Casting parts for a HORROR film," Larsen made contact and showed them his portfolio. They liked what they saw and wanted Larsen to supply some FX, in-



OLD AGE MAKEUP

cluding a rotted dog carcass, a severed hand sequence, some cleaver slashings, a couple of masks, prop weapons, and a head crushing.

This film became *SLAUGHTERHOUSE* (see article this issue) and Larsen reveals, "I was thrilled but also a little scared. I wondered if I could handle it." Larsen is pleased with most of the FX he contributed, though a hectic shooting schedule "kept us behind most of the time," he says.

Since working on *SLAUGHTERHOUSE*, other job opportunities have opened up and Larsen keeps busy with assorted freelance makeup jobs; displays for video libraries and Vons markets; music video makeup FX, dental prosthetic jobs; and Halloween mask- and fang-making.

He has just acquired a patent and trademark on a new product he's invented called "Goreknobs," which resemble little latex monster masks that slip



WOUNDS RIPPED MY FLESH

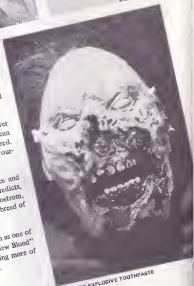


on over your doorknobs. Larsen will also offer up "Grosseries," a bag of bits and pieces of fingers, tongues, eyeballs, ears, etc. He's also got tomatoes, hearts, rotted chests, and dead rodents for all you hardcore chunk-blowing jokers out there, too. "I'm trying to keep all of my products really detailed and of high quality, as well as a good value," he says.

His advice to young, new FX artists is to "never give up. Keep on going. Learn as much as you can about everything. You can never be too prepared. You have to show what you can do and sell yourself."

Larsen cites Tom Savini as a great influence and constant source of inspiration and predicts, "Stan Winston's crew, along with Mark Shostrom, Steve Patino, and David Miller are the new breed of great FX artists."

DEEP RED welcomes Tim (Gore) Larsen as one of the first members of our now regular "New Blood" club. We've got a feeling we'll be seeing more of his work splattered across future issues.



VICTIM OF EXPLOSIVE TOOTHPASTE

MACALUSO'S ENTRY AT MONSTER MAKING CONTEST

JERRY MACALUSO

After a summer visit to California and a "favorable response from everybody," 20-year-old FX artist Jerry Macaluso plans to move out West soon from his current home in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

He placed ninth in the annual "Monster Makers Contest" in April and says his career began "at age 17, I started making masks. I'm now 20. I locked into a film called SCARECROWS, assisting Norman Cabrera on makeup effects, and after it finished, Norman went to work for Rick Baker."

The first job in which he was held responsible for certain FX sequences was SCARED STIFF, a project he shared with head FX technician Tyler (TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE) Smith. "The rest of the year," Macaluso says, "Consisted of little slasher flicks, which I don't regret doing; I think they're fun."

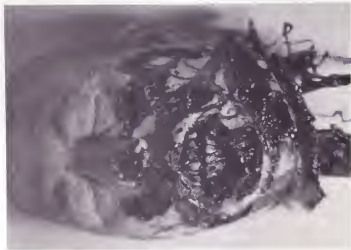
Soon, he got in touch with makeup maestro Dick Smith, "who helped me more than I can ever possibly thank him. I highly recommend anyone interested in this field to get his course, even if you have to steal the money."

In September, 1986, when negotiations fell through with major FX studios and the producers of THE UNHOLY began to look for a smaller shop, Macaluso saw his BIG BREAK and seized the opportunity to prove himself. THE UNHOLY, budgeted at around \$8 million, had only allotted a measly \$50,000 for FX and the major shops in L.A. said it just couldn't be done.

"Well, I wasn't quite sure I could do it," Macaluso relates. "But it was my big chance so I hired a crew and started work on a 9-foot demon, lots of prosthetic gore, and various creatures that inhabit Hell."

Working with Macaluso on the FX crew were Berry Anderson, Linda Arrigoni, and Brian Burgstaller, all veterans of Romero's DAY OF THE DEAD.

SHALLOW GRAVE





ZOMBIE CORPSE



After five months of 7-day, round-the-clock work, "we brought the effects in under budget but a couple of days late. On set, everyone, including the producer, were happy with everything we had done."

In August, 1987, Macaluso got the discouraging news from the producer that they were hiring Bob (HELLRAISER) Keen to provide a different version of the towering demon creature to which he replies, "That really ticked me off, because the production designer designed the damn thing, I didn't."

"Luckily, everything else is in the film that we did," he adds, only slightly encouraged. Oh well, better than a slo-mo poke-in-the-eye with a 15-inch splinter, no?

More from this guy later on in upcoming issues of DEEP RED. Right, Jerry?



PUTRID LITTLE KID

GORE SHIRK COMICS

BRUCE SPAULDING FULLER

Quite frankly, your editor was knocked out when a thick, overweight package from one Bruce Spaulding Fuller arrived in the morning mail. The quality of this guy's work is almost frightening, especially his bold graphic illustrations and his sublimely detailed sculpted pieces. Page after page full of absolute top-drawer stuff emerged from that packed-to-bursting envelope and quite honestly, I stood humbled. Jeet, one might muse, this guy's too good at too many things: fire, fluid, spectacular graphic pen-and-ink work, and some of the most unsettling, prosthetic work we've seen in quite some time.

"My earliest ambition in life," he says, "Was to be a chemist. Not because I cared or knew anything about chemistry, I just wanted to be a MAD DOCTOR like in my favorite films."



RIFFED TORMO

BRAINS FOR BEAUTY





Later, Fuller couldn't simply pin down just one career, he wanted it all! He's been an actor, photographer, comic book artist, art director, sculptor, and FX man. He's been a prop master with local theatre groups, supplying various prosthetics, mummies, werewolves, and vampires to both "The Phantom of the Opera" and Charles Ludlum's "The Mystery of Irma Vep."

Soon after his startling black-and-white illustrations were published in Gore Shriek comics, he began working with Ed French on a variety of film projects and, to date, has four features to his credits and three (soon to be four) issue comic series to his name.

"If I were to claim any goals," Fuller says, "They would be to do a bit of everything. My interests lie in film, theatre, comics, and every facet of the entertainment industry. I like effects because they allow you to be a sculptor, a painter, a magician,



NAIL HEAD ON A STICK



and that certain Mad Doctor I always longed to be." Fuller slyly adds, "There's also that wonderful pride in really being able to turn someone's stomach!"

Currently, projects include illustrating a new mini-comic series based on the famous Topps Chewing Gum "Mars Attacks" cards of the '60s in addition to supplying further Gore Shriek comics with stories and art. His last two film credits include



FIT RAT-BRAINS FOR BEAUTY

ROTTED HEAD



"ABIGAIL" IN THE ROAD



THE ROAD and BRAINS FOR BEAUTY (see News Slashes), both of which appear to be real messy gut-busters.

Bruce Spaulding Fuller concludes with, "My other goal would be to make a living completely from my first childhood love...MONSTERS. And, as I see goals like comics and film being realized, I know this one's not that far away either."

No kidding. With a portfolio like his, what-in-hell's gonna stop this guy? Whew. Très hot-hot. Ouch!



ROBOT HOLOGRAVIT

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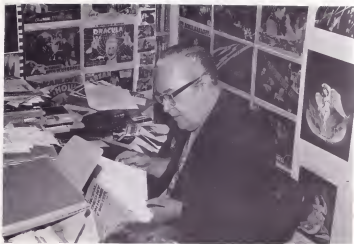
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CHAS 24



ASK ACKERMAN

DEEP RED INTERVIEWS

THE FAMOUS MONSTER(MAN)

It gives one a sense of great relief and pride, even, to know that not all people grow up, mature, and enter their "golden years" to remain as lame, boring, and unimaginative as your parents, your uncles, everybody it seems sometimes. People have not only lost their imaginations, but they've severely impaired their ability to feel a passion, a drive, a faith in something. An unnameable catalyst that lights you up from the inside out; a force reflected in your voice, your eyes, and your laugh.

Forrest Ackerman is an anomalous resident of a world hellbent for homogenization. Thomas Edison once said, "Five percent of the people know how to think. Ten percent think they know how. And Eighty-five percent would rather die than think." Forrest is, indeed, a member of the rapidly dwindling numbers of the first group and he knows not only how to think, but how to feel, too. A true original, a man who is quite obviously very happy with the way things turned out. No regrets. His passion and undying love for the genre are reflected in every gesture, each kind word, every bubbling anecdote that streams forth uninterrupted from this highly animated, peculiar "senior citizen."



His credentials as editor/writer of Famous Monsters for nearly 30 years and his unparalleled collection of movie props, posters, and books should insure his inclusion in the Halls of Horror Fame. There is something about the man that transcends simple hero worship. Even your jaded and ferociously cynical editor, who must shamefacedly confess that (SURPRISE) I never read Famous Monsters, really didn't know Forrest J. Ackerman from the Forrest guy who played the sergeant in F Troop!

My first visit to his famous "Ackermansion" was six or seven years ago when I was helping a friend assemble a display of Forrest's collection for a college-sponsored exhibition. Besides coming away bedazzled at the thoroughness of his museum, the instantly recognizable prize props, and the thousands of memories housed within these walls, your editor left with an impression that this man, regardless of what he calls his "peculiar hobby," knows something about how to live. How to cele-

brate life, your passions, and things maybe only you hold dear to your heart.

Upon returning to the "Ackermansion" recently to conduct this interview, I was once again amazed and heartened to know that the energy is still sizzling. He jumped into this interview like it was his first, enthusiastically relating stories to us he must have told hundreds of times. He let in a constant flow of visitors and media folk who traipsed through his house from morning 'til night, and still after a long, exhausting day, you could see he was genuinely gladdened by the fact that the world still wanted and needed him.

Read. Enjoy. This man has something to teach all of us about how to really enjoy one's time upon this planet and how to keep the magic ALIVE!



RED: What are your fondest memories about your early movie-going habits and your first experiences with horror in cinema?

FJA: I had picked the right pair of maternal grandparents. They took me to as many as seven films in a single day. We'd start at 11:00 in the morning and roll in about midnight. I caught on to Quasimodo in *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*, *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*. I saw those 49 dinosaurs of Marcel Delgado get loose all over the screen in *THE LOST WORLD*. And, yes, Fritz Lang's *METROPOLIS*. I had to go on Saturday afternoons in those days and practice the piano, but soon as I got rid of that, I was on the streetcar and right downtown. I was living in San Francisco at the time of *LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT* (1929) and I'd see a film like that and then see it two or three times in the same week. When *THINGS TO COME* came out, I saw that six times in the first week. And, just recently, last year in Berlin, I saw my favorite fantastic film of all time, *METROPOLIS*, for the 77th time!

RED: What did you think of Giorgio Moroder's colorized, re-edited version with the rock soundtrack?

FJA: I think Moroder did the world a great favor with that. Otherwise, it would've just been lost on the little tube-on TV. This way, a whole new generation turned out and was turned on by it.

I got a credit at the end of it. Moroder had combed the world and thought he'd gotten hold of all the possible stills, but I had some stills from the personal collection of the screenwriter and I had known Fritz Lang. He had given me some of his private stills.

RED: What are your most precious pieces in your collection?

FJA: If we had the big earthquake here or the atom bomb, the one thing I would make a drive for to preserve would be the painting he (Frank R. Paul) did for me. (It is an enlarged repainted cover of the October, 1926 *Amazing Stories* cover, featuring Forrest in the foreground and "Amazing Fancies" on the masthead.)

The Robotrix from *METROPOLIS* would probably be the second thing I would preserve. Thirdly, the first edition of *Dracula*, which was signed by Bram Stoker, the author, and then later signed by Bela Lugosi. In the meantime, it's been signed by Lon Chaney, Jr., John Carradine, Frank Langella, and Christopher Lee.

RED: Recently, graphic horror films have been under fire by both the MPAA and outraged moralists. Do you remember any censorship groups out to protest the early "controversial" horror movies of the '30s or '40s?

FJA: I don't recall any negativity. When I saw *FRANKENSTEIN* on Christmas Day, 1931, in San Francisco, they hoked it up so when you walked to the theater, there was an ambulance standing outside. Once you got inside, there were a couple of nurses, who were actually unemployed actresses. I stayed twice. I took it for real the first time.

No, I really don't recall anything against monster movies or horror films, except in England in 1933, when the H. G. Wells' film of *ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU* (aka *ISLE OF LOST SOULS*) came out. For 25 years or so, it was kept off the screens of England.

RED: Did you think you were going to stir up some hostility with your magazine and its glorification of the gruesome?

FJA: In February, 1958, when *Famous Monsters* started, I was absolutely convinced I was going to catch it from the PTA. They'd want to know what a grown man was doing debasing the minds of young America. It never came to pass. I got two really outraged letters.

RED: So, what did you tell them?

FJA: Well, if they feel Edgar Allen Poe should've never put his pen to paper or that Mary Shelley disgraced herself creating *Frankenstein*...Or if you feel Halloween should be banned as a national holiday...If you feel Lon Chaney wasted his career, then there's really nothing further I can say to you.

RED: What was your magazine's policy on reviewing films? It seems you never had an unkind word for anybody or any movie.

FJA: When young Joe Dante, 13 at the time, sent me, in his opinion, the 50 worst horror films ever made, I saw in it more than just a letter. I embellished it, packed it with stills, and made it this article called "Dante's Inferno." The publisher got me on the phone and had a flaming fit. "Don't ever bite the hand that's feeding you. The studios will be saying no more previews and no more free stills for you. Never, ever, under any circumstances, criticize a film again." But, I couldn't contain myself on the DeLaurentis KING KONG. I was outraged; I thought that was such an atrocity. I saw it free and still wanted my money back!

RED: What recent horror films have impressed you?
FJA: FRIGHT NIGHT. I still haven't caught up with THE FLY yet. ALIENS, absolutely! I got 13 scare jumps out of the original ALIEN and didn't have time to quit jumping on this one. I was on the edge of my seat all the time.

RED: What about the more explicit, graphic "splatter" movies?

FJA: BLOOD FEAST, 2000 MANIACS, TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, FRIDAY THE 13TH, a number of the zombie films. I saw THE BEAST WITHIN because a young friend, Paul Clemens, played the beast. There was an 8-year-old girl in the audience and I wondered what she made out of it. She said, "Oh, I thought it was awfully funny!" I don't think they made that picture to be funny, but movies can be all things to all people. I see these films as a triumph of makeup. I'm glad to see an era where makeup is recognized and can be up for an Academy Award.

RED: So, what is it about horror films that contribute to their rabid popularity?

FJA: For me, it's been getting away from the every day, the mundane. I've had this insatiable thirst for fantasy—something different than the world around me for a couple of hours. Consequently, I've always enjoyed those transformations: THE WOLFMAN, DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, GODZILLA, KING KONG.

Something inside, maybe it goes clear back to the caveman days...we like to be scared and excited



as long as we can walk away from it. It's a question of being scared...with impunity.

RED: You've made quite a mini-career out of your numerous cameos in various genre productions. Can you bring us up-to-date on your appearances?

FJA: Future things to watch for—I'll be with Bobbi Brescia in *THE WASP* (aka *DEADLY STING*), *LUCIFER'S CHEST*, *THE WIZARD OF SPEED AND TIME*, something in Detroit, then Dallas. I'm eating cheese-cake at 4:00 in the morning in *INTO THE NIGHT*. In *SCHLOCK*, I'm sitting there in the theater so absorbed in *THE BLOB*, that I don't notice when the Schlockthropas sits down and starts eating my popcorn. The best thing I've ever done was typecasting. I play the curator of the last museum on Earth when World War III has destroyed civilization in a film called *AFTERMATH*.

A POLISH VAMPIRE IN BURBANK, I thought it was hysterically funny. I'm President of the United States for about five hours in *AMAZON WOMEN ON THE MOON*. In *DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN* I was bad Dr. Beaumont. I've also appeared in *TIME TRAVELLERS*, *THE HOWLING*, and *SCALPS*.



RED: So, what keeps you going? Doesn't the constant barrage of fans ever get to wear a bit thin?

FJA: I'm so pleased, I guess like Katoiff was at 80, that the world still wanted him. I hope if I hit 100, the world will still be comin' around.



GORE SCOREBOARD

THE RATING SYSTEM



bow-wow



nearly worthless



ordinary



solid & scary



hard core horror

The Gore Score

This evaluation deals with nothing but the quantity of blood, brains, guts, and assorted precious bodily fluids spilled during the course of the film. It's quite simple, really. **THE BAD NEWS BEARS GO TO JAPAN** would get a big, fat zero in the Gore Score category, while **D&K BUTCHER, M.D.** and **MANTIC** would most likely receive juicy nines or tens.



MARY POPPINS, DUMBO, and TERMS OF ENDEARMENT



BLOODSUCKING FREAKS, THE EVIL DEAD, and THE GATES OF HELL

DIARY OF THE DEAD (1976)

(Original title unknown a Charles B. Moss, Jr. production)



Let me qualify the three skull rating: this is a decent flick, but it isn't a horror movie. Yet another case of fraudulent video repackaging of a non-genre drama. Very good of its kind and worth a viewing. Bitter struggle between impotent husband (Hector Elizondo in a marvelous performance) and hateful live-in mother-in-law (Geraldine Fitzgerald) leads to...well, it's not really murder, but the ensuing knot of backyard burials, missing persons, mistaken identities, and morbid guilt is certainly engaging. Re-editing of key central sequence, to serve as artificial opening for the new video title, needlessly confuses the narrative structure of this gripping yarn, reminiscent of Cornell Woolrich and vintage Alfred Hitchcock Presents. Good story, served by fine direction and performances, builds to a truly macabre conclusion that turns a potential rip-off into a satisfying evening's diversion. Not to be confused with the hard-to-see **DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD**, documentary covering the making of Romero's **DAWN OF THE DEAD**. (SB)

Carolina studios for the Southern circuit since the early 1970's. He has produced occasional exercises in horror, including **WOLFMAN** (1979) and the 3-D **ROTTWEILER** (1982), as well as this tepid Bible Belt "thriller" designed to put the fear of God into the audience. SEE! The wages of sin! SEE! A graphic decapitation! SEE! Redlit lame-o paintings of hell! SEE! Doodles the goat! "As ye sow, so shall ye reap!" Southern priest in early 1900's bemoans townspeople turning away from the church en masse and evokes the Wrath of God, which arrives in the form of a dark scythe-wielding death figure who episodically confronts a cast of greedy, grasping sinners. Murderous adulterers and alcoholics, a scheming banker, a wicked son, and a nasty old woman are rewarded with apparent damnation, insanity, or death. Ah, but it's all a collective dream, see, allowing for an upbeat finale in which they change their ways and see the light, ending with the church pews filled with redeemed sinners. Hallelujah, brothers and sisters! Dreary fundamentalist morality tale couldn't scare a three-year-old, lifeless curio preaches righteous hell-fire and brimstone, inspires only tedium and derisive laughter. (SB)

A DAY OF JUDGEMENT (1981)

d: C. D. H. Reynolds



Regional movie mogul Earl Owensby has been pouring drive-in movies out of his Shelby, North

STIGMA (1972)

d: David Durston



Another interesting Charles B. Moss, Jr. low-budget production. Director/writer David Durston's

follow-up to his infamously violent **I DRINK YOUR BLOOD** (1971) is certainly milder fare, though no less lurid in its depiction of sordid small-town ignorance, bigotry, and sexual scandal. Ex-con medical student Philip M. Thomas (current co-star of **MIAMI VICE**) stumbles into an isolated New England island community infected with venereal disease. Suicide and death follow as Thomas uncovers the cause of the epidemic: a congenitally infected teenage girl is having her revenge upon her sheriff father and the town that harbors their secret.

Particularly memorable is the queasy sequence wherein Thomas is confronted with the first victim, an old fisherman who operates the coastal lighthouse (the picturesque and appropriately phallic setpiece for the climactic revelations). His skin ravaged and joints horribly swollen by advanced stages of the disease, the old man can't stop laughing although he is in constant agony. Dunston holds our interest throughout, though the film is flawed by uneven pacing and acting and is dated by its trendy 1970's score. Effectively staged climax unfortunately lapses into laughably preachy dialogue straight out of VD sex education films. However, Dunston does make use of some harrowingly graphic footage from one of those same sex ed flicks earlier in **STIGMA** to unnerving effect.

Entertaining, odd mystery/melodrama is significant as being the first exploitation film to overtly deal with sexual disease in a horrific manner, predating Cronenberg's **THEY CAME FROM WITHIN/SHIVERS** by four years. A remake for the AIDS generation would be a nasty item indeed! (SB)

THE VIDEO DEAD (1987)

d: Robert Scott



Writer/Director/Producer Robert Scott's entertaining made-for-video horror show begins with an unexpected delivery of a free television set to a suburban home. The self-activating TV only shows **ZOMBIE BLOOD NIGHTMARE**, even when it's unplugged. The zombies mystically emerge from the screen and kill the hapless homeowner. Three months later, new owners buy the place, unaware of the bewitched TV in their attic or the dead shuffling around in the backyard. Teenager Rocky Duval turns the set on, and the mayhem begins.

Filmsy nonsensical story is short on logic, but manic and driven enough to be engaging. Gary Bokerum includes nifty half dozen zombies, mucho chainsaw splatter, and an obvious twist ending. It's fun, even though it's too silly to be scary and too grim to be funny. Just something to tread water with between **VIDEODROME** and Lamberio Bava's eagerly-awaited **DEMONS 2**, which also involve TV-spawned zombies. (SB)

BAD BLOOD (1986)

d: Mike Newell



Paranoid New Zealand farmer thinks people are poisoning his livestock and stealing his farm and firearms, so he proceeds to blow 'em away, over-so-slowly, in this plodding, 40's period piece, occasionally highlighted by some lush cinematography.

Leave it to the kisin' cousins of the Australian Film Brigade to make even mass murder seem exquisitely boring. (CB)

FOREVER EVIL (1987)

d: Roger Evans



If you can keep yourself from laughing out loud, there's a thrill or two to be had from this ambitiously weird, kinky little entry. An inventor invites his Big Chill buddies over for a party weekend at his secluded house, only to have it crashed by Yog Kathog, an ancient cloaked demon whose appointed victims must die in terror. Plenty of low-rent opticals and a couple of balls-to-the-wall splatter scenes, including one in which a possessed woman savagely rips a demon baby from her womb.

The film's way too long at 101 minutes and burdens itself with too many supporting players. Gorehounds will undoubtedly yelp with glee at two or three of the over-the-top FX extravaganzas. (CB)

BLOODY NEW YEAR (1986)

d: Norman J. Warren



A plane, carrying equipment used in a "time warp experiment," crashes on an island in 1959 and is discovered nearly 30 years later by some band of dimwits, washed ashore after their boat sinks.

They party it up at the seemingly-haunted Grand Island Hotel and watch **FIEND WITHOUT A FACE** until a guy comes off the screen, chokes this dude, then flies off into the projector beam. This rousing, laughably out-of-control bogosity was directed by the well-meaning fellow who helmed the equally dorky **HORROR PLANET**.

(CB)

BIG MEAT EATER (1981)



2

d: Chris Windsor

(Not to be confused with **MEAT EATER**, also reviewed in this issue.)

Another revisionist variation on the 1950's science-fiction cycle, melded with a disarming sense of humor and frequent, wonderfully nonsensical musical numbers (including the title song, "Big Meat Eater," sung by man/mountain Big Miller).

The plot is impossible to synopsise. Suffice to say, it involves corrupt small town politicians; robots from space who can re-animate the dead; a Golem obsessed grandma from the old country; and a catalytic septic tank beneath the butcher shop which has somehow distilled toxic waste, meat by-products, and the remains of Big Miller's victims into a radioactive space-age fuel, Baloneum. Self-conscious, deliberately trashy Canadian production contrived to be a "cult" film, it revels in its own insanity and 5-cent special effects with amusing results. The characters are marvelous, particularly Big Miller's Abdullah the Meat Eater, who looks like he stepped out of a John Waters film. Despite the murders, meat fetish, and cannibalistic undertones, there's only a few seconds of gore as the Mayor's hand is mangled by his car's fan belt. Director Chris Windsor's restraint is in keeping with the film's cartoony approach to its ingratiating looniness. Some fun to be had here, if you're in the right frame of mind.

(SB)

SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE 2 (1987)

d: Deborah Brock



9

The sister of one of the survivors from the original begins having **NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET** type surreal dreams about the murders and decides a weekend at Dad's condo is just the thing to kick these bloody blues. So, she and her obnoxiously

bad all-girl band invite their boyfriends down for a couple of days of condo-carnality, only to be pursued and hored to death by a drill-toting, leather-clad rocker whose guitar does far more damage than a 10,000 mega watt fuzz tone solo ever could.

This film features the usual lethal combination of teenagers/cops/maniacs in an uneasy blend of rock, sex, violence, humor, and parody into what becomes, ultimately, a jarring, incomprehensible mess.

The flashbacks and nightmare sequences are exceptionally well-handled, though, and the splashy FX scenes by James (**STRANGE INVADERS**) Cummins are truly outrageous (i.e., a girl's face turns into a huge zit and explodes, showering the camera with three quarts of pus).

If you can handle the dramatic lapses and the jarring lack of sense and continuity, then a good time can still be had. Depends on your mood.

(CB)

JONATHAN (1969)

d: Hans Geissendorfer



4

A real oddity—an anti-fascist vampire movie! This ponderously artsy West German political allegory uses its free-style adaptation of Stoker's **DRACULA** to make some feeble attacks on totalitarianism, and everything masquerading beneath the gloss of a European art film. As a vampire flick or a cautionary tale, the film craters out on both ends, despite some neat pieces of artifice: a slaving hunchback who collects crucifixes from the vampires' unfortunate victims; the long shot of the vampires dissolving in their robes after being driven into the sea; the peasants enjoying the last moments of life left to them.

The story itself concerns an undead Hitler look-a-like, The Count (Paul Albert Krumm), who, along with his minions, terrorize a peasant village on the German North Sea coast. The local van Helsing type (Oscar von Schab) organizes a rebellion among the students and sends Jonathan (Juergen Jung) to the count's castle in an effort to rouse the languishing prisoners within to revolt. Geissendorfer's allegory fails on several levels, not the least of which is the shaky equation of the film's *Dracula*

figure, a feudalistic holdover, to represent a generalized fascism. The film does dissolve into a series of pretentious, painterly and gory set pieces, smothered with all the trappings of avant-garde cinema: long takes, stately pacing, heavy-handed direction, and a soundtrack composed of bits of choral music and Edvard Grieg, which positively screams piety. Perfunctory acting doesn't help, either.

Also, why the hell are all these young, white-clad ballennas continually striking poses? Why are they in the movie? What the fuck does it mean? On the other hand, the movie does manage at times to conjure up a hypnotic tone of dread via the fundamental sadism which is at the core of the story and the picturesque locale shooting and imagery which at times is reminiscent of Bosch and Breughel. But none of this can save this preachy and nigh incomprehensible art/gore flick. Believe me, this makes Argento's excesses look subtle by comparison. (TF)

DANCING WITH MYSELF (Music Video/1984)

d: Tobe Hooper



That's right, TOBE HOOPER'S BEST POST-CHAINSAW FILM! This MTV cover of that old Generation X punk fave for ex-Gen member Billy Idol has more style, wit, and kinetic zip than any of his last three mega-buck Cannon misfires. Among the highlights of this misogynistic-as-all-get-out vid are a couple of hilarious CHAINSAW homages. In one scene, a middle-aged hubby prepares to do in his yacking shrew of a wife with a sledgehammer (a la Leatherface). In another, some psycho (with the same Early Modern Detritus deco of 'SAW in his apartment) sharpens up a razor as a hapless female victim-to-be writhes in chains behind a screen. Hooper also does a great job capitalizing on Idol's Frankenstein looks (and has Idol using some Mad Scientist equip to blow away a bunch of punk Romero zombies at one point).

Tasteless stuff? Yeah. Great Song and Great Vid? Yeah. Definitely shows you what Hooper was capable of before he succumbed to big buckitis.

Now if we could get John Carpenter to do a version of Warren Zevon's "Werewolves of London"!

(TF)

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC (1987)

d: Jeffrey Bloom



Whatever dubious Grocery Store Gothic charge the late V.C. Andrews' best-selling Doppelgänger family saga may have had (with its themes of incestuous relationships, infanticide, and a confined harrowing childhood) has been neatly quashed by inept filmmakers committing one of the genre's cardinal sins: making a movie from exploitative material and refusing to exploit those angles. The launderized result is now about as sordid as a Hallmark greeting card. (Apparently a graphic depiction of the sexual relationship between the two older siblings was left on the cutting room floor after a negative screening.) Jeffrey (BLOOD BEACH) Bloom's directing and scripting are leaden and flat on both accounts and never allow the film to at least provide a queasy ride through the dementia genre. The plot has a lovely young widow (Victoria Tennant) who, with a family of four kids, no money and no job skills, takes off for the family digs in order to win back her ailing, rich father's love, and, more importantly, get reinstated into his will. The kids (including DEADLY FRIEND's ghost-friend Kristy Swanson) aren't too thrilled with the arrangement, especially after meeting their cruel, bible-toting granny (Louise Fletcher doing her Nurse Ratched From Hell bit as usual), who informs them that they have to remain in the guestroom until their mother wins back her dad's love.

Really bad, unintentionally campy studio fodder with a contrived ending that is so laughable it has to be seen to be believed. All the adult characters are sadistic gargoyles (with Tennant's transformation into monstrous gold-digger a little too quick to be plausible); while the younger principals, with the exception of Swanson, don't really come across too well. (Does Bloom really think that's the way kids talk?) Lots of static shots and Movie-of-the-Week melodrama don't help either. There are a few poignant moments (such as when the kids are creating their own fantasyland in the upstairs attic) and some stately locations, but they don't add up.

Of special interest to genre fans: Wes Craven was set to helm the movie at one point. (TF)



MOVIE HOUSE MASSACRE (1984)

d: Alice Raley



Lamentable bit of genre flotsam that will certainly do nothing to enhance the plummeting career of its star, Mary Woronov (**ROCK N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL**, **EATING RAOUL**, etc.).

This minimalist, micro-budgeted, dim-witted film is best described in the words of one of the bimbo usharettes who blubbers, "What kind of joke is this?" Indeed. (CB)

THE PSYCHOPATH (1975)

d: Larry Brown



Dipsht fruitcake of a kiddie show host (kind of a cross between Poe Wee Herman and a salesman) kills parents who've been abusing their children. Featuring the ugliest cast and the stupidest cops ever seen. Next. (CB)

BEHIND LOCKED DOORS (197)

d: Charles Romine



Another obscure Boxoffice International non-hit you shouldn't worry about missing. Slow, talky, utterly pointless soft sex/horror item meanders from an interminable party in a barn to two women being imprisoned in a nearby house by avoyeuristic ex-mortician indulging in sexual experiments in search of a "perfect love mate." Assisted by his nasty sister and dimwitted handyman, he forces himself on his captives, telling them he lets the cooperative victims go; while the difficult ones are killed and preserved (in a tableau of provocative nude poses) in his basement. After a smattering of nudity, bondage, and rape, the usual conflagration burns the place down as the two women escape and the corpses in the

basement come to life and have their revenge on the deviant trio. The two chicks return to the endless barn party, apparently none the wiser. For a film whose story is driven by sexual desire and perversion, this is a remarkably lifeless, drab, and dreary affair. Arf, arf. (SB)

MAGIC LAND OF MOTHER GOOSE (1966/67)

d: Herschell Gordon Lewis



No, **DEEP RED** hasn't gone sappy on you. We're covering this one for the H.G. Lewis devotees among you, as no other magazine will do so. Second of two kiddie features Lewis made for a flat fee for producer J. Edwin Baker (the first was **JIMMY, THE BOY WONDER**), it was probably filmed in '66, but not released until the following year, when Lewis made six other features (including **THE GRUESOME TWOSOME** and his gore 'epic' **A TASTE OF BLOOD**)! Daniel Krogh and John McCarty's definitive book on Lewis dismisses this as being "apparently lost"; Sinister Cinema has unearthed it in good condition.

This may well be Lewis' crudest film: inept, static, charmlessly flat fairytale musical fantasy looks like Lewis filmed a local amateur production intended for grade school assemblies (which may be exactly what he did). Primitive stagey quality vaguely recalls film pioneer Georges Melies' fantasy shorts from the turn of the century, sans Melies' wit, energy, imaginative invention, or special effects. Lewis only uses a couple of crude camera tricks, relying upon clumsily performed stage music.

Of marginal interest to gorebounds is Ray Sager's starring role as Merlin the Magician. Sager later earned notoriety as Montag the Murderous in Lewis' classic **WIZARD OF GORE** (1970). Sager is as ham-handed as ever with the sleight-of-hand tricks, but his Montag is amusingly foreshadowed when Merlin reduces the local witch to a smoldering skeleton (to the strains of Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries," yet).

As with Lewis' entire oeuvre, this has a certain tacky fascination for the initiated, but the matinee audiences this was intended for must have been bored shitless. Ends with our host, a bogus Santa Claus, saying "I...I... I must have been sleeping!" You will be, too. I've reviewed this one thoroughly, so do yourself a favor and skip it. (SB)

CRAZY FAT ETHEL II (198)

d: Nick Phillips



Break out the Nilla wafers—Ethel (Priscilla Alden) is back! Phillips' feeble sequel to his own 1975 **CRIMINALLY INSANE** (see **DEEP RED 2**) is a patchwork affair, overly dependant upon extensive use of gory footage from the original feature to pad out the miserable opening and ending sequences. That the new material is badly shot on video (with wretched sound and visuals that are much, much cruder than the first film) doesn't help matters.

Older, grayer, fatter Ethel is discharged from the asylum when budget cuts force administrators to relocate the 'less dangerous' inmates into halfway houses. As food is scarce, Ethel quickly becomes dangerous again, in her own hangdog manner. The film's midsection is of interest for its perverse view of life for the mentally ill in the halfway home, and for its appropriately queasy food fixations (including a bug-eating tenant à la Renfield in **DRACULA** and straight-from-the-can dog food passed off as corned beef hash). Alden is, again, incredible to watch with her expressively dour face, insatiable appetite, and endearing habit of snacking between stabbings and laughing at nothing whatsoever. She is the film's only virtue. It's a freak show, though, and even at only a little over an hour, it's sometimes like watching paint dry, lacking even the few quirky elements that made **CRIMINALLY INSANE** such compulsive viewing.

Worst of all, the sequel ignores the original's nasty ending and its even nastier story possibilities.

Oh, well. Pass the Alpo...

(SB)

MAD RON'S PREVUES FROM HELL (1987)

d: Jim Monaco



Finally! A compilation of horror trailers with real guts...and balls to boot. Forget the limp-dick, disappointing **TERROR IN THE AISLES** (which must be where they left the scares, they sure weren't on the screen) and the tepid, only occasionally titillating **TERROR ON TAPE**. Flush both **FILMGORE** and **THE BEST OF SEX AND VIOLENCE** from your memory. Get ready for (**SURPRISE!**) a bloody, bitchin'-assd trailer collection that goes for the throat and doesn't let go.

Culled from over 12 hours of available footage, these goremeisters from Lansdowne, Pa. have finally found the magical combination of cannibal, creatures, carnage, and connoisseur's delights that should sway even the most jaded fan. Included are rare bits deemed too offensive by the censors and later excised from all theatrical prints. Over half the 45 films previewed are unavailable on videotape and were too obscure to ever play again at revival houses.

Roll up your sleeves, put your hip boots on, and wade into splatter-drenched snippets of: **DERANGED**, **I DRINK YOUR BLOOD**, **3 ON A MEATHOOK**, **CANNIBAL GIRLS**, **FLESH FEAST**, **DEEP RED**, **TOXIC ZOMBIES**, **THE UNDERTAKER AND HIS PALS**, **BLOOD AND LACE**, and **HORROR OF THE ZOMBIES**. Plunge into the ultra-rare footage from Umberto Lenzi's (**CANNIBAL FEROX**) early gut slinger, **MAN FROM DEEP RIVER** (1972) (**SACRIFICE**, **DEEP RIVER SAVAGES**, **MONDO CANNIBALE**). Squirm to the excruciatingly real open-heart surgery from **NIGHT OF THE BLOODY APES**. Wince at the hyperviolent, disturbing newsreel-style clips from an early precursor to **FACES OF DEATH**—the mondo bizarre **AFRICA: BLOOD AND GUTS**. (Had enough, yet?) Finally, savor the rare continental aroma of Mario Bava's **TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE**; the international nastiness of **ILSA, SHE WOLF OF THE SS**; and the rampeping redundance of **LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT**. (Keep repeating, repeating..."It's only a movie, only a movie.")

This tape is, indeed, a treasure trove of some of the juiciest, lip-smacking splatter scenes yet assembled. Because it's graphic, explicit and paced like a bullet train, you'll likely forgive the homey, somewhat cornball humor of the host, "Nick the Ventriloquist," and his zombie dummy pal "Happy."

A great party tape and one that holds up admirably to repeated viewings. (CB)

**2 GREAT BLOOD-HORRORS
TO RIP OUT YOUR GUTS!**

**LEMORE-A CHILD'S TALE OF THE
SUPERNATURAL (1973)**

d: Richard Blackburn



Director/Co-Writer Richard Blackburn's view of 1920 rural Americana, gangsters and undead has to be one of the most mesmerizing and original little horror films of the '70s. Sort of an ALICE IN WONDERLAND MEETS THE EVIL DEAD, the movie concerns the quest of lovely 13-year-old Lilah Lee (Cheryl Smith) for her gangster dad who has fallen prey to a beautiful lady Nosferatu (Lesley Gille). With its mixture of Lovecraftian backwoods horrors, beguiling period ambience, and religious pseudomorphism, this little oddity is hauntingly wistful in its glimpses of innocence lost and of a world of steadily escalating degeneracy, ranging from Lilah's trek through red-lit sinful towns and cursed woods teeming with throat-tearing ghouls. Like DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS and THE VELVET VAMPIRE, the film offers vampirism as a feminist defense against male domination (personified by Blackburn as a puritanical bible-thumping minister-only false note here). And, the movie is certainly one of the most original vampire flicks in its depiction of bloodsucker class stratification: Gille's minions are an elite cowed and fanged cadre as opposed to the less couth zombies shambling around in the forest. The film is full of arresting images: the white-suited preacher stumbling among the bodies of the ghouls after one of their skirmishes, and Lilah's scary bus ride to Gille's.

Despite the crudity of some of the performances and technical credits, this remains a gem and is definitely recommended to serious genre buffs. Blackburn also went on to co-write EATING RAOUL. (TF)

DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS (1971)

d: Harry Krumel



Yes, this retelling of the Elisabeth Bathory "bloody countess" legend (also basis for that Hammer Ingrid Pitt vehicle, COUNTESS DRACULA) is YET ANOTHER Sheridan Le Fanu "Carmilla"-type lesbian vampire done from the early '70s, but with a few kinky twists. Termed a "gothic fairy tale for full grown adults," this film's Eros and Thanatos doings overcome a familiar plot (vampirism as a liberating feminist force a la Stephanie Rothman's VELVET VAMPIRE) with its chic, highly-polished sheen of docu-

dence. Film has newlyweds Valerie (former Miss Canada Danielle Ouimet) and Stefan (John DARK SHADOWS Karlen doing a creditable job) arriving at a deserted seaside hotel in Ostend, Belgium. They are later joined by a couple of vamps in the form of an aging beauty in silver lame' (Delphine Seyrig) and her lovely assistant (Andrea Rau). Seyrig immediately sets her sights on the delectable Miss Ouimet and, after an initiation into the vampire sisterhood, convinces her what chauvinistic sadist Karlen is whereupon both women exsanguinate him. Fine performances (especially Seyrig's Marlene Dietrich turn as the ironic, world-weary lady Nosferatu); stylish, imaginative direction and decor, and some nifty bloodletting (best one involving a shower scene between Karlen and Rau leading to a nasty razor impaling) make this a nice cold kiss from the grave. Best thing about the movie, however, is its almost hypnotic tone of sheer perversity (mainly in way script trashes Stefan's clean-cut image about halfway). This is typified in the howler of a scene where Seyrig and Karlen reach simultaneous orgasms as the former describes in graphic detail how her "ancestor" kept the 'ol wrinkles away by bathing in virgin's blood.

But, be warned, you haven't lived until you've met Stefan's "mother."

Check this out, it's what THE HUNGER could have been. (TF)

PLUTONIUM BABY (1987)

d: Ray Hieschman



Danny glows in the dark, eats raw fish (right off the hook), humps like a bunny, and plays exterminator to those power-hungry corporate fascists who turned his mom into a nuclear mutant zombie.

Sounds alright, but the execution is so undistinguished that the film nearly erases itself from your memory before the end credits roll. Kind of an uneasy coupling of SILKWOOD and the far classier CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH, with disappointing results. Also loses points for seemingly obligatory insert shots of yet another lame-assed aerobics class wagging their butts in your face.

Sure, there's a couple of mutant attack rabbits, some entry-level zombie makeup, and a few squishy FX scenes (one guy does get ripped in two and hung from a tree), but even at a relatively brief 85 minutes, this film really d-rags. (CB)

LUNCHMEAT (1986)

d: Kirk Alex



The graphic gore is all this number has going for it. Most of the violent action occurs just off screen, but there's bloodshed aplenty. Backwoods maniacs supply local junkfood joints with human flesh, but the family meets its match (not saying much) when they slaughter a jeepload of hapless youths in an aimless cat-and-mouse struggle. Climax leaves us with the survivor (teenage girl driven insane) chased by last of the murderous hillbillies (fat retard cannibal carrying a birdcage full of chickens) onto the highway in a flaccid rip-off of TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE's classic finale. Laughably malsadroit California production shamelessly cribbs from TCSM, THE HILLS HAVE EYES, and their sorry sequels. Lots of grunting, groaning, gristle and blood, two pickax-through-the-foot sequences, and assorted mayhem involving axes, meathooks, and shovel serve dreadful story, direction, and acting. The box for this videocassette is incredibly gory and unpleasant—truth in advertising? (So why did I actually enjoy this turkey? Must have been the right combination of alcohol and drugs.) (SB)

THE MEATEATER (1978)

d: Derek Savage



Lowbrow, low-budget variation on THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. Fire-scarred, rat-eating, old fuck (Arch Johnson), obsessed with movie star Jean Harlow, haunts an abandoned movie theatre. A family of new owners take over, promising the reopened cinema "will play nothing stronger than a 'G' "...unaware they are housing a flesh-eating monster. (Definite 'R' material, don't you think?) Though the title and mislabeled dwelling upon the eating of meat (sausages, slim jims, hotdogs, etc.) and graphic footage in the nature film the theatre shows suggest cannibalism, this is never explicitly shown. Anyhoot, after offing a couple of kids, the old hermit kidnaps the owner's daughter, thinking she's Harlow. Slight story, a geeky cast of characters (including "Lt. Wombat" and "Mr. Knuckle"), uninspired—but occasionally effective—direction and the use of film clips and some gory makeup by Steve Neill make this a passable time-waster. (SB)

THE NIGHT VISITOR (1970)

d: László Benedek



Convicted (but innocent) murderer Max Von Sydow comes and goes from isolated, 'inescapable' asylum to terrorize those who wronged him. Moody, murky, overrated minor thriller borrows director Ingmar Bergman's frigid landscapes and actors (Von Sydow, Liv Ullman, Per Oscarsson) for a contrived and mannered psycho-revenge tale. Sydow gives a compelling performance in a physically grueling role (he must have frozen his balls off running around in subzero temperatures with just shorts and a T-shirt on!); but Benedek's direction is too studied. The slow pacing telegraphs any shocks or surprises, and the story is undermined by its own absurdities (including a talking parrot who figures in the climax). This may have diverted the art cinema crowd, with its discreetly offscreen) strangulation, skull-bashing, and ax murder, but it's s-l-o-w going for horror buffs. At least it's free of the theatrical pretensions that dragged Ingmar Bergman and Von Sydow's collaboration on THE MAGICIAN (1958) into the doldrums. See Bergman and Sydow's rarely-screened HOUR OF THE WOLF (1967) or THE PASSION OF ANNA (1969) if you're into rewardingly bleak Swedish horror film fare that has some substance. (SB)

ZOMBIE NIGHTMARE (1987)

d: Jack Bravman



Jock bodybuilding longhair gets pegged by a carload of punks; his distraught mother goes to Haitian voodoo priestess Molly Mekembe (Manuska Rigaud) who owes the family a favor; Jocko returns from the dead as a zombie avenger armed with a steel baseball bat to snuff the punks one-by-one to heavy metal soundtrack by Motorhead, Thor, Fist, and others. Good opening and absurd over-the-top performance from Rigaud is undermined by predictable story and action, diluted into tedium by the sluggish police investigation of the murders that drags Adam West into the proceedings as a police Captain with a dark secret. Competent enough zombie makeup and production values for a New World release, but it's too derivative and tepid to live up to the slight promise of its first fifteen minutes. (SB)



STAGE FRIGHT (1987)

d: Michele Soavi



Michele Soavi's feature directorial debut is an excellent thriller that hits paydirt with an old-fashioned but remarkably effective scenario which fuses graphic mayhem with lucid, nightmarish beauty in the grand tradition of Freda, Bava, and Argento. Mass murderer/actor "Irving Wallace" escapes from the asylum and invades a nearby theatre, where a director has locked himself and his reluctant cast in for a dusk-to-dawn rehearsal of a play cynically reworked to exploit the murder of one of their own crew members that very night ...Irving's first victim of the evening. The terrifying claustrophobic cat-and-mouse game that ensues is a veritable catalogue of the psychokiller genre's clichés given surprising new impact, thanks to Soavi's direction and relentless pacing. The masked, faceless killer, his arsenal of knives, drills, and chainsaw, even the inevitable shower sequence, are given fresh twists with often devastating results. Soavi also makes the finest use ever of the theatrical setting, from the heights of the catwalks to beneath the floorboards, the most frightening setpiece being the dreamlike image of the owl-masked murderer sitting placidly amid a gruesome tableau he has composed of his victims' gory remains. Accentuated with a gentle shower of white feathers, the camera hovers obsessively over the image. It is a moment of quiet, hauntingly poetic horror, worthy of Franju or David Lynch.



Originally titled *AQUARIUS* (and released in France as *BLOOD BIRD*), this Italian production was made for a mere \$500,000, making Soavi's achievement all the more remarkable. Also notable is the effective and often witty dialogue; Soavi's command of the English language overcomes one of the primary shortcomings of most Italian horror films, which are always saddled with atrocious dubbing and/or clumsy scripting and delivery of dialogue. The film's only real shortcoming is its ending, which has the obligatory knee-jerk twist the genre too often embraces. After the nerve-jangling action that precede them, the climactic minutes seem particularly hollow and unnecessary. Nevertheless, *STAGE FRIGHT* is a masterpiece.

Soavi is perhaps best known for his fine documentary *DARIO ARGENTO'S WORLD OF HORROR* (1985). He was also Argento's second assistant director on *TENEBRAE/UNSANE*, and first assistant on *PHENOMENA/CREEPERS*, as well as serving the same function in nearly all of Lambert Bava's films, including *DEMONS*. Soavi has also had small roles in some of Argento's and Bava's movies, including his performance as the transvestite killer in Lambert Bava's *A BLADE IN THE DARK*. (He also appears in *STAGE FRIGHT* as the narcissistic policeman who proclaims his resemblance to James Dean.) With his feature directorial debut, Soavi proves himself a brilliant successor to his mentors, and a talent to watch.

Finally, it is worth noting that the notorious Aristide Massaccesi, alias "Joe D'Amato," who directed garbage like *BUJO OMEGA/BURIED ALIVE* (1979/84), *ANTHROPOPHAGUS/THE GRIM REAPER* (1980), and its follow-up *ROSSO SANGUE/ABSURD* (1981), the *ATOR* series, and countless others. Yes, that Joe D'Amato was the uncredited executive producer of *STAGE FRIGHT*. Screenplay is credited to "Low Cooper," who is actually frequent D'Amato collaborator, George Eastman, a.k.a. Luigi Montefiore, the homely actor who played the cannibalistic ghoul who ate himself in *THE GRIM REAPER*! Ah, only in Italy...although D'Amato and Eastman reportedly work on as many as ten films a year! This is probably the best film they've been connected with to date. **RECOMMENDED** (SB)

NIGHTFLYERS

d: T. C. Blake (Do I smell a pseudonym?)



Based on the book by George R. R. Martin (a good writer), this production looks like it's passed through half a dozen producers, and even more editing rooms. Catherine Mary (NIGHT OF THE COMET) Stewart and Lisa Blount are on a spaceship which wants to kill its human passengers; nothing else in the movie makes much sense. The sets are nice and they try hard with the photography and visuals (excluding those phony optical FX, which I almost always hate); but the pace and dialogue are slow and boring. Despite the fact that they cram a lot of action into the second half (including a great split-by-laser face effect), it's all flat and uninvolved stuff. A mess. (The alien sports an earring and a British accent.) (KG)

HELLO MARY LOU: PROM NIGHT 3

d: Bruce Pittman



There isn't one original scene in this flick; it's a recycled conglomeration of at least three other genre films (such as CARRIE and ALIEN to name two). Who cares? If you wanna sleaze at the drive-in (well, too late for that now), any movie with Michael (SCANNERS) Ironside and a "long" full-frontal female nude sequence in a girls' gym locker can't be all bad. It's all a rip-off, but still entertaining. (KG)

IF LOOKS COULD KILL

d: Chuck Vincent



Vincent, a soft- and hard-core porno veteran, attempted a R-rated suspenser in this yarn about a videomaker who's hired to tape the life of a woman suspected of bank embezzlement; he shoots from the apartment across the street. Lots of subsequent, voyeuristic sex is brought into play (shades of BODY DOUBLE and EXTREME CLOSE-UP), followed by just a touch of BLUE VELVET-like female abuse. The slow-moving storyline takes an it's-a-frame-up twist too late, and the acting isn't good, either. The porn stars are using pseudonyms here, such as J. Gillis for Jaime Gillis and Jane Hamilton for Veronica Hart. The climax (so to speak), which is obviously meant to be rousing thrilling, just comes off amateurish and stupid. All involved should stick with fuck films from now on. (Though Gillis gets his arm torn off real good here.) (KG)

THE KILLING TIME

d: Rick King



This minor murder mystery stars Beau Bridges (a good actor who rarely gets a break) and Joe Don Baker as the police force in a small town run by money man Wayne Rogers, who has fun as the prick here. (He beats and rapes his wife at one point.) Into town drifts Kiefer Sutherland (who's in every other film these days), as a killer who impersonates the new deputy in town. Bridges is also fun to watch; as his character, at least in the first half, goes through a couple of changes.

An okay little film. That's about it.

(KG)

DEATHSTALKER II

d: Jim Wynorski



Not having very much in common with the Barbi Benton breasts-and-blood epic, DEATHSTALKER, this "sequel" is another low-budget high fantasy, with a typical wisecracking "hunk" delivering unfunny lines. The plastic and paper sets are too clean looking and phony, but it's good to see John La Zar (Z-Man from Russ Meyer's/Roger Ebert's great BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS) again, as the bad guy. The hero later performs the Bottle of the Titans (the film's subtitle) with a big woman in a boxing ring. The only reason to rent this one is for the stunning Monique Gabrielle, our blonde star in a dual role, looking to me like a cross between the late Dorothy Stratten and Judy Landers. Her face and body are the only good things in the movie (despite their use of outtakes over the end credits.) (KG)





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FRANK HEINENLOTTEN'S BRAIN DAMAGE

